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TRIBUTE TO WILLARD I. WALKER

The University of Richmond Law Review respectfully dedicates this issue to the memory of Willard I. Walker, 1929-1986. Judge Walker had served as a Virginia Circuit Court Judge for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit for more than ten years before his untimely death. He received his law degree from Washington and Lee University in 1956. Judge Walker practiced law in Charlottesville and Richmond, Virginia, before his appointment to the bench. As an adjunct faculty member, Judge Walker inspired law students at both the T.C. Williams School of Law and the University of Virginia. The pages that follow serve as a tribute to the Judge's memory.

WILLARD I. WALKER

*Murray H. Wright**

When I first met Bill Walker he was 41 years old, just the age I am now. At the time, he was rising to the peak of his career as a trial lawyer with McGuire, Woods & Battle. Bill had joined the firm's predecessor in 1960, his legal career having begun in Charlottesville where he commenced practice with his father following graduation from Washington & Lee Law School.

Over the ten years following my arrival at the firm, it was my privilege to sit beside Bill in court and to watch and assist him in the practice of his craft. His incisive mind, quick wit and penchant for strategy combined to make him a formidable opponent for the

* Partner, Wright, Robinson, McCammon & Tatum, Richmond, Virginia; B.A., 1967, Vanderbilt University; J.D., 1970, Vanderbilt University.

best trial lawyers Virginia had to offer.

In October 1976, Bill was called to the bench of the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond. I had lost a mentor and a colleague, but my loss turned out to be the gain of the many whose lives would be touched by this special man over the next decade.

Never was there a man more content than the Honorable Willard I. Walker. Bill accepted the challenges and burdens of his office with dignity and compassion. He gave of himself and was increased in vigor by the gift. His passion was the improvement of the judicial process in all of its aspects. He shared his considerable talents by teaching trial practice to law students and the art of judging to other state court judges. His extensive knowledge of procedure permitted him to assist in the refinement of our Rules of Court.

Judge Walker gave meaning to the term judicial temperament. He was courteous and long suffering. His robe served as a constant reminder of the dignity of his office. It was a source of aggravation to him that some lawyers eschewed the bench in deference to the higher incomes provided by private practice. To him, judging was a privilege, a chance to give something back to society. Bill was honored to serve, and brought greater honor to his office. In all of his work the Judge maintained his keen sense of humor.

His death is a great tragedy to all of us who knew him and were lucky enough to have practiced law in his court. We are comforted in the knowledge that in us some small portion of his talent lives on. We are satisfied in knowing the pleasure it gave him to watch us grow and stretch our skills. We understand, a bit, why Bill Walker so loved his job.