



Court Historical Society NEWSLETTER *Eastern District of Tennessee*



DECEMBER 2010

Oral History Notes

The Court Historical Society has conducted 54 oral histories through the years, and they are on file in the History Suite of the Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse in Knoxville. In the September issue of this newsletter, we published some excerpts from some of those histories. Following are paraphrased excerpts from other histories in the collection. All of those quoted here are deceased.--EDITOR

U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull's recollection of U.S. District Judge Neese asking him in 1986 to arrange for a portrait to be painted of him (Judge Neese) and hung in the courtroom of the old U.S. Courthouse in Greeneville.

He [Judge Neese] told me, 'You do this for me, and when you look at me in my casket, you'll know that there lies a grateful man.'

(EDITOR'S NOTE--A Neese portrait-hanging ceremony was held on April 22, 1987. He died in 1989.)

Knoxville lawyer William C. Wilson, brother of the late U.S. District Judge Frank W. Wilson, discussing, in 1990, Frank's appointment to the federal bench in 1961.

There wasn't a lot of competition for the Chattanooga judgeship when Frank was chosen. He had been very close to Sen. Estes Kefauver and had served as his statewide campaign manager. So Estes thought of him first and offered the judgeship to him.

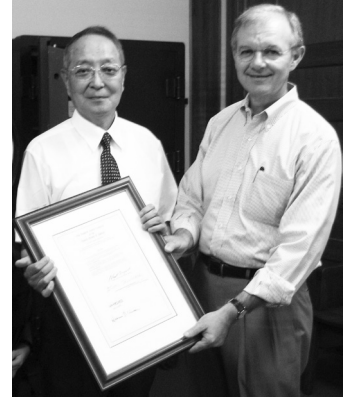
Frank grew up in Knoxville, but he was practicing in Oak Ridge at the time he was appointed. He had practiced in Oak Ridge since he returned from the Army after World War II. He was one of the early private practitioners out there. It was still pretty much a closed city when he set up his practice there.

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Judge Hull Memorialized

The late U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull of our district was one of 11 judges memorialized in West's Tennessee Decisions published in June. The memorial resolution was presented at the Tennessee Judicial Conference in Memphis in June by Chancellor Thomas R. Frierson of Morristown. The Court Historical Society was one of those that provided Chancellor Frierson with some of the information for the resolution. Judge Hull, who served in Greeneville from 1983 to 2006, died in 2008. ■

VISIT BY JAPANESE--The mayor of Murooran City, Japan, Masashi Shingu, left, with the December 1995 Congressional Resolution that named the federal courthouse in Knoxville the Howard H Baker Jr. United States Courthouse. (Please see the reproduction of the resolution below.) The Baker name was of particular interest to the mayor and other Murooran City officials with him when they visited the federal courthouse in July, since Baker served as United State Ambassador to Japan from 2001-05. Murooran City is the sister city to Knoxville. Shown with the mayor is Darrell Akins, local public relations representative who has been involved in the Sister City program for years and who helped host the group.



H. R. 2547

One Hundred Fourth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,
the fourth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five

An Act

To designate the United States courthouse located at 800 Market Street in Knoxville, Tennessee, as the "Howard H. Baker, Jr. United States Courthouse".

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The United States courthouse located at 800 Market Street in Knoxville, Tennessee, shall be known and designated as the "Howard H. Baker, Jr. United States Courthouse".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Howard H. Baker, Jr. United States Courthouse".

Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Strom Thurmond
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate, Pro Tempore.

APPROVED

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William J. Clinton

Oral History Notes *continued*

Granville Sertel, deputy U.S. Marshal in the Chattanooga office, discussing in 1992 his assignment to help in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the late 1950s, during the school desegregation violence.

I was one of the first to go into Little Rock when they had trouble there. Deputy marshals from several offices were detailed to Little Rock. All the marshals practically filled up the hotel. We stayed around in the hotel and played cards and things like that. They didn't want us out on the streets. If there was a football game at Central High School there [the center of the racial problems], we'd attend those games. Of course, nobody knew who we were.

I remember one time we were getting ready to leave the ball game--we were standing by the fence--and some guys walked up to a couple of police officers nearby and said, 'I understand these stands are full of U.S. Marshals.' and the policeman said, 'Well, if you see any of 'em, point 'em out to me. I'd like to get ahold of one of them.' Of course, we just walked on out. They never did know who we were.

*

In discussing the assignment of deputy marshals to Clinton during the school desegregation strife there, which occurred in 1956, Sertel said:

The Marshal's Office in Knoxville handled that by themselves, which had never happened before. All the other details like that that we had, marshals were sent in from all over the United States. We've looked back on that Clinton case and think how fantastic it was that those boys handled that situation by themselves. Outside marshals were never sent in.

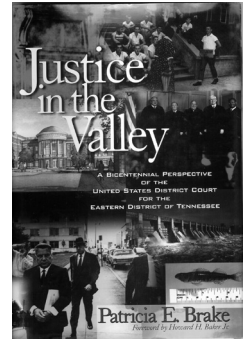
Knoxville lawyer **Arnold Kramer**, in his oral history for the Court Historical Society in 1991, told of a reception **U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor** held at the Sixth Circuit Judicial Conference in Gatlinburg for **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart** (he didn't remember the year, but it was probably in the 1960s).

Judge Taylor called me before the meeting and said, 'Arnold, I would like to have a little reception for Justice Stewart, but you know I can't serve alcohol.' [The sale of liquor was illegal in Gatlinburg in those days.] I asked him if he wanted me to plan something. He said, 'Yes, but nothing big.' I said that **Sara** and I would just invite whoever he wanted over to our hotel room. Justice Stewart and several other judges came. I had bought some alcohol, and most everybody had a drink.

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Gift Books

As time goes on, the book *Justice in the Valley* becomes more and more valuable as a historical record of the Eastern District of Tennessee, plus it is interesting reading.



The 12 chapters in the book start with the period in which Tennessee received its first federal court after becoming a state and move through the Civil War, Reconstruction, the moonshine years, the Great Depression, Civil Rights, Organized Labor in the 60s, the Butcher bank failures of the 80s, and cases in recent years.

The author, **Dr. Patricia Brake**, Knoxville, a professional historian, says, "...this work attempts to place the District Court in the larger context of American history and has selected court cases which represent both historical and judicial trends."

The Society published the 244-page, hardback book in 1998. Perhaps you would like to purchase one or more copies as Christmas gifts. Copies are available at the intake counter of each Clerk's Office in the district at a cost of \$25. If you want to order one by mail, there is an additional \$4 charge for postage. Please see the masthead of this newsletter for the address--postal or e-mail--and the telephone number at which you may place an order. Checks should be made payable to the Court Historical Society. ■

*THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Don K. Ferguson
Executive Director and Newsletter Editor
*Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse • 800 Market Street, Suite 130
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902
865/545-4234, Ext. 2222 • Don_Ferguson@tmed.uscourts.gov*

Oral History Notes *continued*

Gradually, most everybody drifted away. Judge Bob was among them. But Justice Stewart stayed and stayed, and it was great. I enjoyed it. He and his wife stayed at our room that night until, I think, 3 o'clock in the morning. We just had all kinds of conversation.

(EDITOR'S NOTE--Kramer's widow, Sara, is a longtime member of the Court Historical Society.) ■