

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

### **FREDERICK A. BECKMAN**

*Frederick A. Beckman, affectionately known by everyone as Fred, was born February 23, 1923 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and he died at the age of 94 on July 16, 2017. Fred was the son of Amanda and Cornelia Beckman, and he grew up in the Nebraska neighborhood. He graduated from Central Catholic High School in 1941. Fred worked for General Electric, The News Sentinel, and the IRS to save money for college. In the fall of 1942, he entered St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, Indiana. After he enrolled at St. Joe, Fred put his education on hold and joined the U.S. Navy, serving as a Communications Officer stationed at Pearl Harbor. After the war, he returned to St. Joe, graduating cum laude in 1947 with a degree in Economics. He followed that with a law degree from IU Bloomington in 1949. Fred returned to his hometown to practice law where he worked with several small firms and as a Deputy Prosecutor. The lawyers who worked with Fred were truly a cast of legendary characters including Harry Hilgeman, Louie Dunten, Warren Wyneken, and Jack Lawson.*

*Fred and Jack were founding members of a firm that eventually became Beckman Lawson. He practiced law for over 50 years with long standing memberships in the Allen County, Indiana State, and American Bar Associations. He served as President of the Allen County Bar, and as Chairman of the ISBA House of Delegates. He was a tireless community volunteer who served on a number of not-for-profit boards, including Catholic Charities, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, and the Allen County Society for Crippled Children and Adults which is now Turnstone. He was also very active in his parish and the Diocese, and he was proud of his Catholic faith and upbringing.*

*Fred was married 52 years to the love of his life, Betty, who predeceased him a number of years ago. He is survived by his son, John who lives in Indianapolis; son Tom who lives in Boulder Creek, CA with his wife, Kris; his daughter Maribeth Leininger lives in Fort Wayne with her husband, Kevin; and two grandchildren: Adam Leininger of Indianapolis, and Abby Souer of Henderson, KY. Fred's youngest daughter, Dr. Teresa Souer, who was a family physician near Evansville, Indiana, predeceased him. Fred was also grateful for the love and friendship he received from Jane Keltsch and her family.*

*Fred was my mentor and role model, and I owe him so much for helping me become a better lawyer. He taught me -- and many others -- the right way to practice law. His legal practice emphasized ethics and client service. Fred did it the right way or he didn't do it. He expected the highest standards of practice from the lawyers working in his firm, and he wasn't shy about sharing his opinion on any topic.*

*While Fred had a general civil practice, he primarily did estate planning and administration. In the 40 years I knew him, Fred went to trial one time, and I was fortunate enough to be his co-counsel. It was an all-day trial in the late 80's in front of Judge Probst after opposing counsel changed venue to Noble County. For you younger lawyers, there was a long period of time where a change of venue from the county was an automatic occurrence in every civil case. Fred represented an estate in a breach of fiduciary duty and negligence claim against State Farm and its agent. Fred was very committed to this case, especially when opposing counsel told him, "Fred, I can't believe you filed this case against my client." Those were fighting words to Fred, so he was all in. When the dust settled, Judge Probst ruled entirely in favor of Fred's client. I know from talking to Fred years later, that case was one of the proudest moments in his legal career.*

*While the practice of law was Fred's chosen profession, his wife, Betty, and their children and grandchildren were his real passion. He was proud of all of them and loved them dearly.*

*In addition to his outspoken opinions on politics, religion, and the ethical practice of law, Fred constantly promoted the use of plain English. Woe to any lawyer who used phrases like "enclosed herein please find", or "heretofore", or composed complex sentences full of legalese and BS. Fred bristled when he came across that writing style. He constantly promoted the book "Plain English for Lawyers" by Richard C. Wydick, now in its Fifth Edition and available for \$20.00 in hard cover. As a disciple of Fred's, I highly recommend this book to lawyers of all ages.*

*Fred had a great sense of humor and an infectious laugh that penetrated walls, doors, and ceilings. The introduction of e-mail opened up a whole new world of comedy for him. He would regularly send humorous emails to the entire firm. We learned about all the important events in his life such as the renewal of his Notary license or his driver's license, with the latter being a lot scarier than the former.*

*Fred and I had an ongoing dialogue about the Catholic and Lutheran religions. In spite of our different affiliations, Fred financially supported Lutheran causes like Zion Church and Concordia High School. Similarly, he convinced me to support Luers and the stained glass project at St. Peters Catholic Church. As part of our back and forth, Fred gave me a picture of Bishop D'Arcy shaking hands with Pope John Paul II in 1990, autographed and dated by the Bishop. I've kept it in my office all these years, but I will now transfer it to his children for safekeeping.*

*While Fred had strong opinions on many subjects, he always respected the opinions of others and enjoyed a spirited debate.*

*Although Fred fully retired around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we kept an office open for him. For probably 15 years after he retired, he came to the firm almost every day around 11:00 a.m. to read the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. He would then go to lunch with the lawyers in the firm, or walk to the Window Garden in the Summit Building and have lunch with a group of senior lawyers that meet there regularly. After lunch, he would drive home. When Fred moved to assisted living at St. Anne's and became less mobile, a group of us from the firm would pick up several pizzas and have lunch with Fred at St. Anne's, because we enjoyed his company, and he loved to hear gossip about downtown and the legal community. He was mentally sharp and focused his entire life, and because of his age and uncanny ability to recall details, he was a Fort Wayne historian. He loved to talk about his home town and the people, places, events, and businesses that form its history.*

*Here is a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson which describes Fred perfectly. "To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, define the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."*

*Fred was an incredible success and role model and we miss him dearly.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED* that the Allen County Bar Association gives public expression of its sorrow upon this, the occasion to remember and pay respect to Frederick A. Beckman.

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that this resolution be unanimously adopted by those present for this occasion.

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that this resolution be transmitted by the Allen County Bar Association to the members of the Frederick A. Beckman family.

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that this resolution be spread of record in the permanent records of the Federal and State Courts in Allen County to evidence the respect and admiration the members of the Bench and the Bar had for their departed friend, mentor, and colleague, Frederick A. Beckman.

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2017 at Fort Wayne, Indiana.



THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

By: Kristin Bilinski  
Kristin Bilinski, President

By: [Signature]  
The Honorable Craig J. Bobay  
Judge, Allen Superior Court

Resolution prepared and presented by John H. Brandt