

RESOLUTION OF THE
ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION UPON DEATH
OF
WILLIAM L. BRIGGS

Whereas, William L. Briggs, who was a member of the Allen County Bar, died February 21, 1950, we the members of that Bar believe and find as follows:

Mr. Briggs was a native of Gloucester County, Virginia. He was admitted to the Bar in 1916. In 1917 he was admitted to practice in the Indiana Supreme Court and in 1925 to practice in the United States District Court. He graduated from the Law College of Howard University at Washington, D.C.

For the past twelve years Attorney Briggs has been a Justice of Peace in and for Wayne Township, Allen County, Indiana.

He held that important office with honor, distinction, ability, fairness and these qualities in their accumulative effect won for him the respect and esteem of the members of this Bar.

His success in his office of Justice commanded election and re-election. In him the public had full confidence because the people believed that he practised the saying that a "public office is a public trust".

Attorney Briggs was a confidant of people of his race. He advised well and unselfishly.

A strong attribute was his constant courage in meeting the handicaps of life. His handicaps were physical, not mental, not spiritual. His physical disability was beyond the purview of ordinary endurance. Yet with his physical weakness of the past many years, his true self of the spirit became stronger.

Justice Briggs was a scholarly and a Godly man. These, his virtues of the mind and of the soul are gleaned from the following literary passages of which he was capable of appreciation.

Shakespeare in the Merchant of Venice said:

"Earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons Justice"

And Wordsworth:

"We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering".

And William Cullen Bryant:

"Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust approach ~~thy~~ grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

Now, Therefore, be it resolved that the members of the
Allen County Bar profoundly regret the passing of this noble
man and extend our sympathy to the widow, Lucinda; the
daughter Barbara Ann; the son, William Jr., and the seven
sisters and the two brothers throughout their bereavement.

In Witness Whereof we have placed hereunto our hands this
24th day of February, 1950.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE OF
ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

R C Parrish
Chairman

W H Chapman
Judge of Allen Circuit Court

Geo. H. Leonard
Judge of Superior Court of Allen County

Edmund W. Meyer
Judge of Allen Superior Court #2

[Signature]
Members

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

Senior Judge William L. Briggs

WHEREAS we are here today to pay our respects to the memory of our colleague, friend, and mentor, Senior Judge William L. Briggs, who passed away on March 28, 2017, at the age of 80.

WHEREAS Senior Judge Briggs was born on January 28, 1937, in Fort Wayne, Indiana to Justice of the Peace, William L. Briggs and Elizabeth (Byrd) Briggs. He attended Central High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana and in 1953 he joined the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. After returning from the Korean War, he met and married the love of his life, Blanchie Simpson in 1957. In 1958, they had a daughter and named her Stephanie Denise Briggs. William Briggs then earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education in 1972 from Indiana University's Fort Wayne Campus and obtained his Juris Doctorate from the Valparaiso University School of Law. In addition, he earned a Post Doctorate Master's Degree in Judicial Studies from the University of Nevada-Reno.

WHEREAS after graduation from law school, Judge Briggs entered private practice for a period of time and was the Associate City Attorney in Fort Wayne from 1976 to 1980. In 1985, William Leon Briggs, the son of Allen County's first African American elected official, was appointed to serve as a judge in the Allen Superior Court by Governor Robert D. Orr – making him the city's first African American Judge. He served as a judge in the Allen Superior Court Family Relations Division from 1985 to 1998. After his retirement from the bench, Judge Briggs served as a senior judge for the court from 1999 to 2015.

WHEREAS while serving as a judge in the Allen Superior Court Family Relations Division, Judge Briggs helped to implement a number of innovative programs and initiatives including the Allen County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA), the Annual Conference on Youth and the SOS Program (a program that is designed to assist students with their homework and to help them be successful in their academic pursuits). In addition, he received a number of honors and awards from such organizations as the NAACP and Urban League and in 1997, he received the Robert J. Kinsey Award which is an award given annually to a juvenile court judge in recognition of outstanding service to children and youth.

WHEREAS Senior Judge Briggs was a man of honor, decency and integrity. His favorite quote came from

William Shakespeare and says "The evil that men do, lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones." He was inspired by that quote and felt that there was an inherent truth in it. That if you want people to speak well of you, you need to do good things. Well, we can all truly say that our colleague, Senior Judge William L. Briggs, did good things and lived a life well lived and that he led by example and left a great legacy in the Allen Superior Court Family Relations Division.

WHEREAS Senior Judge Briggs was preceded in death by his parents, William and Elizabeth Briggs, and his stepmother Lucinda Briggs. He is survived by his wife, Blanchie Briggs; daughter, Stephanie Denise Briggs; granddaughter, Angela C. Briggs; great granddaughter, Leana L. Briggs; sister, Barbara Ann Warner and a host of other relatives and friends.

WHEREAS, we will miss Senior Judge Briggs and his words of wisdom, support and encouragement. We will miss the stories of the adventures that he and his family had on their camping trips and the fun times that they had at bowling competitions around the country. We will miss seeing the man who set such a tremendous example for us of how a Godly, spirit-filled family man should live.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Allen County Bar Association gives public expression of sorrow upon this, the occasion of the remembrance of the life of Senior Judge William L. Briggs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be unanimously adopted by those present at this assembly upon this occasion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted by the Office of the Allen County Bar Association to the members of the Briggs family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread of record in the permanent records of the federal and state courts of Allen County, Indiana to evidence the respect and admiration of the members of the Bench and Bar for their departed friend, Senior Judge William L. Briggs.

Dated this 7th day of August, 2017 at Fort Wayne, Indiana



THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

By: *Melanie L. Farr*
Melanie L. Farr, President

By: *Craig J. Bobay*
*The Honorable Craig J. Bobay
Judge, Allen Superior Court*

*Resolution prepared and presented by
Judge Charles F. Pratt and Magistrate Lori K. Morgan*