



Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr.

November 21, 1932 - December 9, 2022

The Honorable Walter Homer Drake, Jr.
1932-2022

Retired United States Bankruptcy Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr., 90, passed away Friday, December 9, 2022 at his home in Newnan. He was born November 21, 1932 in Colquitt, Georgia to the late Walter Homer Drake and Mary Lois Cowart Drake. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Ruth Bridges Drake, and brother, Dr. Henry C. Drake.

Judge Drake moved to Newnan when he was eight years old when his father became the Superintendent of Schools. He was the Valedictorian of the 1950 graduating class of Newnan High School. Judge Drake was a graduate of Mercer University Undergraduate and Law School, 1954 A.B. and 1956 LL.B. After graduating law school, he enrolled in the U.S. Army where he served as an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps from 1956 to 1959. After his military service, he practiced law for several years before being appointed as United States Bankruptcy Judge in 1964 for the Northern District of Georgia. He served as Chief Judge from 1968 to 1976. Judge Drake left the bench in 1976 to become a partner in the law firm of Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers. In 1979, he felt the calling to return to the bench and desired to spend more time with his family, so he resumed his career as a bankruptcy judge for the Northern District of Georgia until his retirement in 2021. Judge Drake was the

longest serving bankruptcy judge in United States history and one of the longest serving federal judges.

Judge Drake's love of his alma mater was evident in his commitment of service to Mercer University. He served on the Mercer University Board of Trustees from 2009-2011 and received the designation of Life Trustee in 2013. Judge Drake received the Mercer University Outstanding Alumnus Award in 2017 and the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the Mercer Law School in 2003. Mercer recognized his commitment to the University in 2012 by naming the Athletic Field House for Homer and Ruth Drake.

Judge Drake and his family have been longtime members of Central Baptist Church where he served several terms as a Deacon and he was an Adult Sunday School Teacher for over thirty years. At the time of his death, he was a member of the Myrtle Arnal Mann Sunday School Class.

The funeral is 1:00 pm Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at Central Baptist Church, 14 West Broad Street, Newnan, GA with Rev. Matt Sapp and Dr. Joel Richardson officiating. Following the funeral, the family will greet friends in the church fellowship hall. A private family interment will be at Forest Lawn Memorial Park. Rather than flowers, the family respectfully requests memorial contributions to Mercer on Mission, 1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31207 or <https://www.mercer.edu/give/>

Condolences may be expressed online at www.mckoon.com

Survivors include sons, Walter H. Drake, III (Tracie), Taylor Bridges Drake (Lori), and grandchildren, Harrison, Wesley, Wheeler, Ella Catherine, Taylor, Jr., and Henry.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory (770) 253-4580

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 14. 1:00 PM (ET)

Central Baptist Church
14 West Broad St./P.O. Box 1221
Newnan, GA 30264

Visitation

DEC 14. 1:45 PM (ET)

Central Baptist Church
14 West Broad St./P.O. Box 1221
Newnan, GA 30264

Tribute Wall

PB

“ Judge Drake was one of a kind. He has been a customer of mine for 10 years. My heart goes out to his family and I have to apologize to everyone because I just found out today that he had passed away. I'm very sad. I know he will be missed by many....R.I.P Until we meet again Mr Drake
Paula Brady (Lakeside Dry Cleaners)

Paula Brady - December 14, 2022 at 09:25 PM

EW

“ Judge Drake was a fine man. Always friendly and willing to go out of his way to say hello and ask about family. One of the last men to talk with Ame and me about our fathers at Sprayberry's a few years ago. He was a classmate of Reverend Shaw at Mercer and knew my Dad through our shared community. His presence will be missed.

Ame and Eddie Whitlock

Eddie Whitlock - December 14, 2022 at 08:46 AM

BN

“ Betty Nappier purchased the Richly Remembered for the family of Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr..



Betty Nappier - December 13, 2022 at 05:04 PM

JS

“ Jodie and Neal Shepard purchased the Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant for the family of Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr..



Jodie and Neal Shepard - December 13, 2022 at 04:35 PM

PB

“ Judge Drake was a nationally recognized bankruptcy judge and scholar and a mentor and good friend of countless law students, lawyers, and judges, including me. He served as a bankruptcy judge for 54 years, the longest-serving bankruptcy judge ever.

Like many others, I will miss his warm friendship, his good humor, and his constant guidance and inspiration. My wife Barbara and I extend our deepest sympathy to his other friends and family, and pray that they are comforted by warm memories of his remarkable life and the numerous contributions he made to the bankruptcy bench and bar and those who appeared before him, his beloved Mercer University, the federal judiciary, and the American people.

Paul Bonapfel, US Bankruptcy Judge

Paul Bonapfel - December 13, 2022 at 01:51 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr..



December 13, 2022 at 09:53 AM

BH

“ When I first started practicing law, the first bankruptcy judge I ever met in Chambers was Judge Drake. He was such a kind and honorable gentleman. I had the great privilege of not only practicing in front of him, but also getting to know him personally many years ago when I joined the Court as a law clerk for Judges Kahn and Bonapfel. What a privilege it was to know him. My thoughts are with his family.

Beth Anne Harrill - December 12, 2022 at 08:41 PM

MA

“ I got to know Judge Drake through bankruptcy court. His written opinions were well-considered and concise. Judge Drake treated the practice of law and the courtroom with unparalleled professionalism. He was gracious with his time at continuing education events. Judge Drake has been missed since he retired. His life is one that was well lived.

Mario Adkins - December 12, 2022 at 02:24 PM

LL

“ Judge Drake was a great example of what it means to be a Southern gentleman and a fair and impartial judge. He made a point to get to know all of the attorneys who regularly appeared before him in court. If he called you back to chambers there was a feeling of “oh no”, but more often than not, he just wanted a chance to meet informally. You knew where you stood with him because he was so consistent in his rulings. He was empathetic and had a sense of humor when needed. Since his retirement, he has been missed by all the “regulars” in the Newnan Bankruptcy Court. God speed, Your Honor.

Lisa Loftin - December 12, 2022 at 12:41 PM

JM

“ To Coach Drake/Tracie and the family, I am so sorry for your loss. My deepest condolences to you all!



Janna Melson - December 12, 2022 at 12:13 PM



“ I am so saddened to hear this news. I will miss him greatly. My prayers are with Walter and Taylor and their families.

William Matthews - December 12, 2022 at 11:50 AM

JR

“ I was sad to hear of the Judge's passing. My deepest condolences to his family at this time. The Judge left a lasting impression, both on the city of Newnan as well as on the bankruptcy world. I only knew him in the context of being a judge, but he truly set a standard there that few could match - courteous, even when ruling against someone, fair, to all parties, and consistent, making it easy to know what the outcome would be, even before he ruled.

Jason Rogers - December 10, 2022 at 06:54 PM

CM

Judge Drake was so good to me when I was first learning about bankruptcy, we enjoyed many walks to the bank, he will be missed, my deepest condolences to his family

Catherine Mazzan - December 11, 2022 at 02:24 PM

DC

Offering my sympathy to all the family. However, knowing he is with his Ruth again, makes his passing much easier. They both left beautiful and lasting memories.

Dave Clemens - December 11, 2022 at 05:33 PM

KB

Judge Drake was a wonderful, kind man. He was a fair and generous person. He helped so many young folks gain entry into colleges, as well as start their careers. He treated everyone with respect and was an icon in the bankruptcy world. It has been an honor and a privilege to work for him for so many years. I will miss his hearty laugh - always with a twinkle in his eye. Rest well, Your Honor.

Karen Balkcom - December 12, 2022 at 06:57 PM

NS

I will miss my occasional walk with Judge Drake. I joined him many times on his lunch trips to Golden's and back to his office. On many occasions, he would ask me about politics and my opinion about various people. He was a fan of Newt Gingrich and Johnny Isakson, but always kept his thoughts and opinions private. I will miss his smile and thoughtful comments.

Neal Shepard - December 13, 2022 at 04:03 PM

TF

Judge Drake was a fine man. Always enjoyed speaking to him often as he was making his way to his office in the post office building and I was my making morning round to the banks and post office. I know he will be greatly missed by his family and our entire community.

Tommy Ferrell

Tommy Ferrell - December 14, 2022 at 04:15 PM

GB

Upon my graduation from Emory law School I served as a law clerk for Hon. William L. Norton in the Bankruptcy court in Atlanta. Judge Drake's office was just down the hall and I enjoyed many conversations with him. He was always welcoming to me and over the years as our paths would cross, generally at the SE Bankruptcy Law Institute, he would always take the time to ask about how my life and career were going.

Gerald Blanchard - December 23, 2022 at 11:32 AM

WA

What an honor and pleasure it was to have practiced before Judge Drake in my early years as a lawyer, He was so encouraging to young attorneys and always set such high standards in his Court. He loved Mercer University as evidenced by his long-term service on its Board of Trustees and many other committees. I will always remember the times we spoke in Chambers in Newnan about Mercer's (then) new football team and the past and future of Mercer. It is a tribute to both Judge Drake and his beloved Ruth that their names appear on the field house that stands above Mercer's football field. Judge Drake was a fine, Christian man whose impact on his community, the bench and bar, and Mercer University will always be appreciated and remembered.

Steve Agee

Wendell S Agee - January 11, 2023 at 01:15 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Judge Walter Homer Drake, Jr..*



December 10, 2022 at 01:02 PM