



S. Shepherd Tate

December 19, 1917 - May 28, 2019

S. Shepherd Tate died on May 28, 2019 after a long and fulfilling life of service, commitment and devotion to his faith, his family, his community, his profession and his nation.

Born on December 19, 1917 at 1649 Carr Avenue in midtown Memphis, Shep was the second of five children to Simpson and Adele Shepherd Tate. During his early years the effects of The Depression caused his family to move from Memphis to Tunica County, Mississippi, where his father farmed and his mother worked for the Mississippi Department of Social Services. Shep remained in Memphis and lived with his devoted grandfather Stonewall Jackson Shepherd, for whom he was named. His family believes that those challenging Depression years had an indelible impact on Shep's life as he shared his grandfather's small home at 1804 Carr Avenue with 11 others – his grandfather, grandmother, his two aunts, their husbands and five cousins. He worked a paper route which allowed him to pay for a week of Boy Scout Camp during the summers and he excelled in his scouting experience, creating a lifelong passion for the Boy Scouts. In February 1931, at age 13, he was awarded his Eagle Scout badge by Dan Beard, one of the founders of the Boy Scouts, and was recognized as the youngest Eagle Scout in the history of the Chickasaw Council. His grandfather gave him an Eagle Scout ring that day and he wore it proudly the rest of his life.

After graduating from Central High School in 1935, Shep attended Southwestern at Memphis, working at times as the secretary for Dr. Peyton Rhodes, the college's president. He was a member of Southwestern's tennis team and played tennis regularly into his late 70s. He was also a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, where he served as Eminent Archon (the fraternity's president), was president of the College Episcopalians and was business manager of the college yearbook.

Shep went to law school at The University of Virginia, his grandfather's law school. While at The Law School, as he called it, Shep served as an editor of the Virginia Law Review, was inducted into The Raven Society, Omicron Delta Kappa Fraternity, Phi Delta Phi

International Legal Fraternity, Order of the Coif, and was graduated in 1942, second in his class. He was later inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

Shep immediately enlisted in the Navy and ultimately was stationed in China as an Intelligence Officer, working with the allied Chinese military in preparation for the invasion of Japan. He was awarded the Order of the Cloud Banner by the National Government of the Republic of China. Shep loved his experience in the Navy and remained in the Naval Reserves until he retired as a Commander. He was a Board member and avid supporter of the Navy League of Memphis well into his 90s.

Judge John D. Martin asked Shep if he would clerk for him on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals after the war and he spent a year with the Judge, traveling from Memphis to Cincinnati, where the Court was located. There he met and fell in love with Janet Graf. Jan and Shep were married in February 1947 and experienced a fantastic, blessed life together for the next 67 years.

When his judicial clerkship concluded, Shep returned to Memphis and joined Judge Martin's son, John D. Martin, Jr., in the practice of law and Shep remained at Martin, Tate, Morrow & Marston, PC, until he retired from the active practice of law in 2008 at age 90.

Throughout his professional life and into his retirement Shep remained an active leader in a host of civic, church, educational and professional endeavors. He also received many awards and recognitions for doing the things that he loved.

The Episcopal Church always was a mainstay in Shep's life and he served as Senior Warden of Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church, President of the Episcopal Churchmen of Tennessee and Member of the Bishop and Council and Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee. In an interview with the local newspaper early in his legal career, Shep was quoted as saying, "Jesus makes me tick", and he embraced his faith in all aspects of his life.

Shep served on the Board of Trustees of Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) for many years, was President of the college's Alumni Association, was President of the college's President's Council, was inducted into the Rhodes College Hall of Fame and received the Distinguished Service Award of Southwestern at Memphis and the Distinguished Alumni Award of Rhodes College.

He worked to benefit Scouting and served as President of the Chickasaw Council, served on the Council's Executive Board for years and was awarded the Scouts' Silver Beaver

Award and its Distinguished Eagle Award.

Shep always enjoyed the legal profession and the company of lawyers. While practicing law Shep served as President of the Memphis & Shelby County Bar Association, the Tennessee Bar Association, the National Conference of Bar Presidents and the American Bar Association. He Chaired the Memphis Area Legal Services' Campaign for Equal Justice, served as Director of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel Foundation, served as a Member of the ABA House of Delegates for decades and chaired numerous ABA committees and task forces including the ABA Standing Committee on Professional Discipline, the ABA Standing Committee on Scope and Correlation of Work, the ABA Task Force on Lawyer Advertising and the ABA Standing Committee on Lawyer Competence.

Although he never sought recognition for his public service, his colleagues in the legal profession often provided awards to him. Among other accolades, Shep received the Lawyer's Lawyer Award from the Memphis Bar Association, the Alumnus of the Year Award from the National Conference of Bar Presidents, the Benjamin L. Hooks Award from the Memphis & Shelby County Bar Foundation, the William M. Leech, Jr. Public Service Award from the Fellows of the Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, the Estate Planning Council of Memphis Lifetime Achievement Award and the ABA Senior Lawyer's Division John H. Pickering Achievement Award. He was also a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, a Fellow of the Tennessee Bar Foundation, a Fellow of the Memphis & Shelby County Bar Foundation, an Honorary Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management, a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and a Director of the American Judicature Society.

Shep was active in the Memphis Rotary Club, serving as its President, receiving its Civic Recognition Award and was a Paul Harris Fellow. He served on the Baptist Memorial Hospital Community Advisory Board for almost two decades and received honorary degrees from four different universities.

Never idle, Shep earned his private pilot's license at age 67 and kept a boat on the Mississippi River which he worked on during many weekends in his 60s, 70s and 80s. He delighted in being a Rotary Reader for children and regularly fascinated them with his magic tricks. And for many years in his later life, until he could no longer drive or walk the steps, he delivered Meals on Wheels for MIFA with his dear friends Buddy Adams and John Dillard.

Shep was predeceased by his wife Janet and his daughter Adele and is survived by his

son Shepherd (Sandy) Tate, daughter Janet (Sandy) Walker and grandchildren George Walker, Shepherd Walker, Gillian Walker, Cody (Ashley) Mayer and Teddy Mayer. His last years were brightened immensely through the love and care of his devoted friend and caregiver Leslie Key.

Visitation will be 1 p.m. Saturday, June 1st at Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church, with Funeral Services to begin at 2 p.m. Private Burial will be in Elmwood Cemetery.

The family asks that that, in lieu of flowers, any memorials be sent to Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1720 Peabody Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104, the Chickasaw Council, Boy Scouts of America, 171 S. Hollywood, Memphis, TN 38112 or the charity of the donor's choice.

Cemetery

Elmwood Cemetery
824 S. Dudley Street
Memphis, TN, 38104

Events

JUN 1 Visitation 01:00PM - 02:00PM
Grace St. Lukes's Episcopal Church
1720 Peabody Avenue, Memphis, TN, US, 38104

JUN 1 Funeral Service 02:00PM
Grace St. Lukes's Episcopal Church
1720 Peabody Avenue, Memphis, TN, US, 38104

Comments



“ What makes a difference is difference I can make.

Maury Wade - June 07, 2019 at 08:13 AM