

IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF
BERTRAM S. MURPHY, ESQUIRE

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PA

NO:

RESOLUTIONS OF COMMITTEE

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGES OF SAID COURT:

The committee appointed by your Honorable Court to prepare resolutions concerning the death of Bertram S. Murphy, Esquire, reports as follows:

Bertram Smith Murphy was born on February 2, 1928 in Philadelphia, PA, the son of the late Bertram Smith Murphy and Bessie Griggs Murphy. He had two sisters, Ethel Smith, who predeceased him, and Catherine Ulmer, who lives in Montoursville. The family moved to Montoursville when Bert was six months old. Bert was raised in Montoursville, graduating from Montoursville High School in 1946. After high school, he spent two years in the Air Force. He then enrolled in Bucknell University, receiving a senatorial scholarship. He graduated from Bucknell in 1952 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law in 1954.

On December 27, 1954, Bert married Dr. Edith Lechner Murphy. The couple had four children: Marilyn Murphy of Hughesville, Steven Murphy of Seattle, Washington, Elizabeth Steele of Cascade, and Matthew Murphy of Wilmington, NC. There are eight grandchildren.

Bertram S. Murphy's preceptor during law school was Thomas Wood. Following graduation from law school, Bert was admitted to the practice of law in the Courts of Lycoming County and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He commenced practicing law with Thomas Wood and Nathan W. Stuart in the Susquehanna Trust Building located at 120 W. Fourth Street. In 1962, the partnership purchased

the building at 161 West Third Street, across from the former Lycoming County Jail, and practiced under the firm name of “Wood, Stuart & Murphy.”

Thomas Wood was elected to the bench in 1964. At that time, Henry G. Hager and Clinton W. Smith joined the practice, creating the firm of “Stuart, Murphy, Hager & Smith” as of August 6, 1966. Bert practiced with that firm and successor firms at that location until January 1, 1985, when he joined the law firm of Liebert, Short, Fitzpatrick & Hirshland, practicing in the Hart Building at 30 W. Third Street. On August 1, 1988, Bertram S. Murphy left that law firm to form the law firm of “Murphy, Butterfield & Holland” with partners Jonathan E. Butterfield and Fred A. Holland. Bertram S. Murphy became “of counsel” to that firm in 1999. At that time, he spent most of his time in the Wilmington, NC area, assisting his son, Matthew, in a real estate development company.

Bertram S. Murphy enjoyed a stellar reputation in the legal community in Lycoming County, and received the coveted AV rating in Martindale-Hubbell, due to the respect of his peers. He enjoyed an excellent reputation with the court and with all members of the bar.

Bert’s reputation in the legal community was as a practitioner who could “put deals together.” Bert was a competent trial lawyer, as illustrated by his service as Lycoming County’s First Assistant District Attorney, from 1960 to 1964. However, his forte was with an office practice, consisting primarily of banking law, business law, real estate, and estate planning and administration. Bert was a member of the Board of Directors and general counsel for the First National Bank of Montoursville. He continued in this role through various mergers, serving as counsel and director for the Bank of Central Pennsylvania, and then for Commonwealth Bankshares. He served as chairman of the Commonwealth Bankshares Executive Committee at the time Commonwealth Bank was acquired.

Bert served as counsel to numerous local businesses throughout his career, and he was valued by his business clients not just for his legal knowledge, but also for his common sense and practical advice. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce, and in this capacity, he also served as the first chairperson for the CRIB Advisory Board, and was instrumental in getting this innovative business incubator off the ground in this area.

Bert developed an expertise in school law through service as the solicitor for the Montoursville Area School District. He also developed expertise in the field of estate planning, and, through attendance at numerous seminars and through his ability to deal with complicated financial planning issues, he gained a well-deserved reputation as an expert in the estate planning field.

One of the distinctive aspects of Bertram S. Murphy's legal practice was his early acceptance of the role of paralegals in modern law practice. By training paralegals and then utilizing them extensively, Bert freed himself for the more complicated aspects of the practice of law. His paralegals appreciated the faith he placed in them, and they were his avid supporters. Charlotte L. Walters spent decades working with Bert in the role of paralegal. She was succeeded by Kelly Grugan Crist, who likewise spent many years devoted to Bert's legal practice. His innovative utilization of paralegals led him to be named Williamsport's "Boss of the Year" in 1989 by the Williamsport Chapter of the American Business Women's Association.

Bertram S. Murphy took time from his busy legal practice to involve himself in numerous activities beneficial to the community. He was president of the Lycoming Law Association in 1979. He was secretary of the Montoursville Masons for a number of years. He was chairman of the Finance Committee at Faith United Methodist Church in Montoursville. He served as head of the lawyers' division for the Lycoming United Way. He served on the Loyalsock Township Planning Commission. He was counsel

to Hope Enterprises for many years. He was a founding member of the Williamsport Riding Club and the Loyalsock Men's Club.

Bert loved the out-of-doors and loved sports. In earlier years, Bert was an avid hunter and fisherman, and loved being on the Loyalsock Creek. He was a member of the High Rock Hunting Club. Later in life, Bert concentrated his sporting inclinations on the game of tennis, and on skiing, both cross-country and downhill. He also was an avid traveler.

With Bert's death on August 1, 2003, his family, his friends, his clients, the Law Association, and the communities of both Lycoming County and Wilmington, NC sustained an irreparable loss.

Your committee recommends adoption of the following resolutions:

BE IT RESOLVED that the passing of Bertram S. Murphy has been a loss to the bar of Lycoming County of an outstanding member with unique talents, a loss to his family of a devoted, loving, and inspirational member and example, a loss to his two communities of a generous, vibrant, and creative contributor, and a loss to his friends of a charming and stimulating companion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the records of this court and that copies of the same be sent to his widow and children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED this court and its bar do hereby extend to his widow, Edith, his children, Marilyn, Steven, Elizabeth, and Matthew, his grandchildren, and his sister, Catherine Ulmer, a deep and heartfelt expression of sympathy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan E. Butterfield, Esquire

Fred A. Holland, Esquire

Malcolm S. Mussina, Esquire

Joseph L. Rider, Esquire

Gary T. Harris, Esquire