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Foreword

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MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE LAW REVIEW

FOREWORD

*Henry A. Politz**

A judicial colleague of nearly two decades very aptly commented on the occasion of a ceremonial proceeding that Charles Clark looked more like a judge than anyone had a right to do. If anything, that assessment was an understatement, for the now-retired Chief Judge Charles Clark of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit always looked like the consummate judge. But there was considerably more. During his more than twenty-three years of judicial service Charles Clark constantly and consistently was the consummate judge—in appearance, action, word and deed.

Charles Clark was appointed to the Fifth Circuit on October 17, 1969. He left the active practice of law and began his judicial duties on November 11, 1969. On October 1, 1981, when the Eleventh Circuit was formed from the states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, previously a part of the “Old” Fifth Circuit, Charles Clark became the Chief Judge of the “New” Fifth Circuit, composed of the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. He continued to serve in that capacity until his retirement and return to the practice of law on January 15, 1992.

The court he led was the most productive per-judge of any appellate court in the nation. During his tenure Judge Clark was the author of over 2800 opinions. As a member of the panel or *en banc* court he participated in the decision of more than 7400 cases. This alone was a remarkable feat, but Judge Clark’s formal judicial duties constituted only a part of the picture. The scope and breadth of his extra-judicial duties were both a topic of conversation by his admirers and a marvel to behold. In addition to carrying his full share of the court’s docket, Chief Judge Clark was deeply immersed in the other court functions. He served for over ten years on the Judicial Conference of the United States, the policy-making body for the federal judiciary. For eight years he was a member of the Budget Committee of the Conference, serving seven years as chairman, during which time he was the judiciary’s spokesman to the Congress on matters involving appropriations to the judicial branch of government. He was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Conference in 1984 and was elevated to the chair of that auspicious committee in 1989, an assignment he performed until his retirement.

* Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Wherever he walked, Charles Clark left a mark of excellence — as a judge, for which his written opinions bear witness, and in all related judicial activities. He earned the respect, admiration, and friendship of all with whom he came into contact. One could hardly aspire to more. Those of us who have toiled with him in the judicial vineyard will miss his guidance, his firm hand, his kind counsel. He leaves with our fondest best wishes.