

JUDGE WILLIAM J. HOLLOWAY, JR.: SERVANT OF THE LAW

My good fortune of friendship with, and mentoring by, Judge Holloway began in 1969 when I was clerking for Judge Murrah. It was a family friendship because my wife-to-be was hired as docket clerk at Crowe, Dunlevy, Thweatt, Swinford, Johnson, and Burdick while Judge Holloway was still Lawyer Holloway.

In 1969, Judges Murrah and Holloway exercised general subject matter and personal jurisdiction over the entire fifth floor of the federal courthouse, occasionally allowing the FBI or the IRS to use some of the unoccupied offices for seminars and training sessions. The two judicial families were small. As Chief Judge, Judge Murrah had two secretaries and two clerks. Judge Holloway had one secretary and one clerk.

The two chambers were close not only physically, but in other ways as well. When Judge Murrah was away from the courthouse on one of his many official responsibilities, Judge Holloway was attentive to the well being of Judge Murrah's staff. If someone was ill, Judge Holloway would keep close tabs on the person, offering to take her or him to the doctor, bring food, or run errands that needed to be done. When Judge Holloway took his staff to lunch, the Murrah staff was always included, Judge Holloway paying of course.

The law clerks for both judges had the great opportunity to work closely with Judge Holloway because his chambers were not finished, and he spent most of his time in the library. I can still see him sitting at a library table, many times collar unbuttoned and tie undone, a legal pad before him, pencil in his left hand, surrounded by reporters as he prepared an opinion. A dictionary definition of a Holloway opinion might read, "Always well crafted; displays complete mastery of the facts and the law; characterized by objectivity and impartiality; gives full

consideration to the arguments advanced.” In the words of another fine judge, a Holloway opinion is as “clear as crystal and as crisp as bacon.”*

One thing you learned quickly was that Judge Holloway had a wonderful sense of humor. Judge Murrah had a rule that clerks were not to remove their suit coats during work. Being the late 1960s and early 1970s, this rule was not observed scrupulously when Judge Murrah was absent from chambers.

Murrah clerks would be working in the library, sans suit coats. The door would open, and there would be Judge Holloway, grave concern on his brow, complete sincerity on his face. “Men, men, I just saw Judge Murrah leave the elevator, and he is coming this way.” Now, you knew that Judge Murrah had called from Washington, D.C., that morning to be certain work was being done. You knew he was halfway across the country, and couldn’t be in the building. But if Judge Holloway said Judge Murrah was coming down the hall, you believed Judge Murrah was coming down the hall.

Having donned your coat in a mad scramble, you would nervously glance at the door, only to see Judge Holloway, chuckling gently, a smile on his face. “Your time is improving, but we had better keep working on it.”

Many are the stories that speak to Judge Holloway’s sense of what is right. Some years ago, a very fine Oklahoma City lawyer told me one from the time he clerked with the Crowe firm while in law school. Lawyer Holloway asked him to research a very important legal issue in a case the firm was handling for one of its major clients. The clerk found a case directly on point that supported the client’s position. When Lawyer Holloway went to discuss the case with the legendary V.P. Crowe, he took the clerk with him, introduced him to Mr. Crowe, and gave the young clerk full credit for finding the case.

Now, one may say that was the right thing to do. Of course, it was. But the point is that Judge Holloway knew it was very meet, right, and his bounden duty to give credit to the clerk, and that he did.

In the spring of 1940, the low countries and France had fallen. Only Great Britain stood in the westward path of further aggression by the Third Reich.

* *Hope Natural Gas Co. v. Fed. Power Comm’n*, 134 F.2d 287, 312 (4th Cir. 1943) (Dobie, J., dissenting).

2015] *Judge William J. Holloway, Jr.: Servant of the Law* 97

At that time, the revered Judge Edgar S. Vaught of the Western District of Oklahoma held a naturalization proceeding. One person he invited to speak was a high school student, William Judson Holloway, Jr. Young Holloway told the soon-to-be-new-citizens that the youth of the nation desired peace, but if war came they would answer their country's call.

Franklin Roosevelt said Judge Holloway's generation had a rendezvous with destiny. In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy said this generation was "tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace." For Tom Brokaw, it is the Greatest Generation.

I once asked Judge Holloway his thoughts on being part of that very special group of men and women. His response was pure Hollowayesque. "Oh, all generations have faced trials and testing. Ours was no different. We just did what had to be done."

Be that as it may, there is no question that Judge William J. Holloway, Jr., represents the Greatest Generation at its very best. A belief not merely in the necessity, but in the value, of hard work, tolerance for differing points of view, a willingness to help those less fortunate, integrity, *one's word is one's bond*. A reference book with the entry, "Greatest Generation," could have no better text than, "See the life of Judge William J. Holloway, Jr."

For more than four and a half decades on the federal bench, Judge Holloway was a faithful steward of the rule of law, scrupulously observant at all times of his oath as an Article III judge to "administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich." Now, another of the Greatest Generation is gone from our midst, and we miss him. But we find solace remembering how blessed we are that Judge William J. Holloway, Jr., was part of our lives.

Von Russell Creel
Professor of Law Emeritus, Oklahoma City University School of Law