

HOMILY FOR
THE HONORABLE WILLIAM JUDSON HOLLOWAY, JR.
MAY 1, 2014

Sanctuary, St. Luke's United Methodist Church

GREETING

Friends and family, we have gathered this afternoon to praise God, to witness to our faith, and to celebrate the beauty of life. We are here especially today to honor the memory and legacy of Judge William J. Holloway, Jr., who now is experiencing eternity fully restored, fully healed, fully renewed in the presence of Christ and of those who arrived before him, especially his parents and his son, reunited and assured forever that their souls rest well in God's caring love. We are also here to celebrate the beauty of knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is in the midst of every element of life, including moments of grief, remembrance, and healing. Bill Holloway believed this truth throughout his life.

It is in that spirit of confidence and celebration that we are gathered today, in the church Bill knew from his childhood and a worship center that has brought him spiritual hope and healing. We are here giving and receiving comfort, giving and receiving joy as we celebrate the life of William Judson Holloway, Jr.

One of Judge Holloway's favorite hymns was "All Things Bright and Beautiful." The words to the hymn are in your bulletin. I invite you to stand, as you are able, and join together in singing.

PRAYER OF COMFORT

God of peace and promise,

All that we have ever been given is ultimately Yours. Now, hear our thanks for the life of William Judson Holloway, Jr. You gave us the gift of his life, and he made an indelible mark upon our lives. Allow the grip of sadness to lessen with the loving support of those around us. Teach us to trust Your love, Your healing, Your grace, and Your promise of Eternal Life. Fill us with your peace and confirmation of Your promise of everlasting life, and open our hearts to hope. We thank You this day for the blessings of life. We are grateful for Your sustaining power and presence in life, in death, and in life beyond death. In this time of sorrow, help us to see beyond any heartache and find comfort in knowing that You are our help and our hope for tomorrow. Hear now the prayer Your son Jesus Christ taught so long ago and the prayer that sustains us today.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

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MESSAGE OF HOPE

God is with us today as we remember a great man.

Judge Holloway and I had a very special friendship for the last several years, and the more I have read, heard, and pondered the man we are here today to memorialize, the more I find myself envious of those of you who have known Judge Holloway for a lifetime.

He and I shared a favorite scripture, *Micah* 6:8. He opened his Bible to that passage when he swore people to tell the truth. That leads me to believe several things about him. First, his faith was important. Second, he sought answers to important questions, especially questions about how to live. And third, he dedicated his life and his integrity to the high power of justice, mercy, and humility.

The Honorable William Judson Holloway, Jr., was born in Hugo, Oklahoma, June 23, 1923, and the person here who probably has known him the longest is his cousin Margaret. She smiled and corrected herself when we were talking about him the other day. She called him Billy. As he grew from his rural beginning, to the Governor's Mansion, to the remarkable man we honor today, some of that little Billy stayed within him.

When his father was elected Lieutenant Governor the family moved to Oklahoma City and, two years later, following the impeachment of the Governor, the Holloway family was ready to move to the Governor's Mansion. When Billy's father was installed, the now-impeached Governor said he couldn't leave until his children finished their school year. He was promptly told by official voices that his children had also been impeached and to immediately vacate the premises so that the new Governor could move in.

Roller skating in the ballroom was one of his treasured memories—until his mother caught him. He didn't like being in trouble, so he never did that again. He learned the lesson of consequences of behavior from an early age, and it served him well throughout his life. He had the privilege of watching Halley's Comet from the balcony of the Governor's Mansion and hosting a birthday party there because it was big enough to invite his entire elementary school class. When his father dedicated the "Pioneer Woman" statue in Ponca City, Bill met Will Rogers.

According to Margaret, Bill never disappointed his parents. They expected a lot, and he met their expectations. Although he was an only child, he had scads of cousins. One of their favorite traditions was the

monthly party they called the Happy Birthday and Relative Club. Everyone pitched in 50 cents for children's gifts and \$2.00 for grown ups. They all dressed up. Men wore coats and ties. Holiday gatherings were similar, and Margaret says the children still connect the smell of cigars to family gatherings and men in suits.

At one of his father's first press conferences, young Billy Holloway discovered one of the reporters had flown on a plane. He proceeded to ask a hundred questions, finally finishing up by asking the reporter if he knew his hero, Charles Lindbergh, who had recently flown across the Atlantic in his *Spirit of St. Louis*.

He attended Oklahoma City's Harding Junior High School and Classen High School. Not long before his death, Bill took a drive with his cousin Margaret. They drove by their old schools and reminisced about their favorite teachers—Edith Jones, who instilled a love of reading; Della Link, who taught English Composition; and C.E. "Pop" Grady, the debate coach who prepared him for winning at a national debate competition as a sophomore. Two years later, he won the national competition again. Elaine Tucker taught him what it meant to give a good speech.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1947, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, and he earned his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1950. He held a position as an attorney in the General Litigation Section, Claims Division, of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Bill and Helen met on a double blind date. The prearranged match-ups simply didn't match up, so the couples swapped dates partway through the evening. Bill and Helen married in 1963. He once told Margaret's mom, his aunt, that the smartest thing he'd done in his entire life was to marry Helen.

Their family began when son Bill was born in 1964 and then Gentry who came along in 1966. He knew that being a husband and father would be the highest calling of his life. He was devoted to his family. Even if his work required him to be away, he never failed to express his love and pride and hope for them.

He was the breakfast guy at the Holloway house, fixing breakfast for his son and daughter and getting them to school. In his children's growing-up years, he rarely got home before 6 or 7 p.m. Even while the family took vacations, he found a way to work. Gentry recalls him keeping a stash of dimes and quarters so they could drive from their

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Colorado cabin to a pay phone in town. The kids plugged the machine as he called back to the office.

Bill could always “make things better,” whether for his children or his friends. He spent a lot of time with his son Bill on scouting activities though it was a strain to pull away from his work.

Bill and Helen loved to socialize: dinner parties, conversation, and the opportunity to use his dry and perfectly timed wit. He was briefly in private practice with Crowe & Dunlevy in Oklahoma City until 1968, when President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated him to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, confirmed September 13, 1968, and commissioned September 16.

As a member of St. Luke’s Methodist Church since 1935 (the age of 13), he listed his pastor, Reverend Dr. W. Carroll Pope, as one of his references for that important position. When the investigator arrived at Reverend Pope’s home, he wasn’t home (probably at a church meeting), but his wife, Marian Pope, invited the man in the house and said she knew as much about Bill Holloway as her husband did. Marian died in 2013. She considered it one of many great personal accomplishments to have been responsible for Judge Holloway’s appointment to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Bill’s grandfather Holloway was a Baptist preacher in Arkansas, so faith was something he knew about from an early age. First Lady Amy Holloway was a long-time member of St. Luke’s Methodist, joining when it was still located on 8th Street and Robinson, before the long move to the suburbs of 15th and Robinson in the ’50s. Both the children were baptized at St. Luke’s and were active as children in Sunday School and youth activities.

Then there were his car stories. His was the oldest car in the federal parking lot. Bill’s car was held together with duct tape. He drove it until it disintegrated. On a family vacation in Colorado, Bill walked up the hill holding part of what looked like a grill in one hand. He told his son that a bridge had jumped out and bitten his car. That grill still hangs in the cabin.

He loved being outdoors, especially in Colorado. His daughter Gentry recalls a very special father–daughter time. Just the two of them, beautiful water, clear Colorado air. As they approached the dock after a fishing trip, she was conscientious about not standing in the boat. Her father had impressed upon her how unsafe that could be. She turned to tell him she had tied up the boat and saw him standing. You guessed it:

he fell out backwards in shallow water. He was completely drenched. After she helped him back in the boat, he said, “Here is what we tell your mother—that I caught the granddaddy of all fish and while I was pulling him in, he jerked me overboard. Then you saved me, but the fish got away!”

More recently, Gentry borrowed her uncle’s Jeep and took her dad up over a ridge to a boulder-surrounded lake. She says she can still see him with his brown fishing hat, enjoying the quiet and beauty.

He and Helen adored their grandsons. Even though they are still very young, he was already putting aside money to make sure they would be given a good education. He wanted to maintain the strong patriarch position—a man who fulfilled the needs of his family.

He was a huge extravert. He enjoyed time with friends and always remembered names. He had the gift of remembering situations going on in family members’ lives. He would ask about their circumstances, always referring to people by name. In a note to Judge Holloway’s family, Vice President Joe Biden offered these words of comfort: “There is an Irish Headstone that reads, ‘Death leaves a heartache no one can heal. Love leaves a memory no one can steal.’” He said, “Bill led a remarkable life that I know you are proud of, and he was a true public servant in every sense of the title.” Judge Holloway led a remarkable life.

In the passage of the Scripture I referred to, Micah asks what God expects and is told: The first expectation is to *seek justice*. This expectation was most surely met in Judge Holloway’s life, but seeking and being an instrument of justice are not always concurrent.

Jim Gibbens recalls Bill’s intellectual brilliance in the analysis of cases, writing opinions of the court, and in his influence on the other judges in the decision-making process.

Oklahoma City University President Robert Henry once closed an introduction: “Let me put it this way—if I or a member of my family, God forbid, ever got in trouble with the law, I’d hope that our appeal landed with Bill Holloway—unless we were wrong!”

Gentry remembers many late nights watching her father pace the floor while considering a judgment, especially in capital cases. He knew the weight of his decisions. He taught his children to fight for justice, do the right thing, and to stand up for the rights of those who have no voice. The right thing is not always the easy thing.

In all aspects of his life, he had uncompromising integrity. He looked into every possibility and applied his unflinching work ethic, including

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working most Saturdays. He would take it upon himself to find an open deli and bring fresh cold cuts for any clerks working that day.

President Robert Henry once said: "I have never questioned for one moment that his only concern has been trying to rule correctly and fairly and with the fullest measure of compassion that the law will permit."

Judge Jerome A. Holmes says of Judge Bill Holloway: "The nation has lost a thoughtful, dedicated, and compassionate jurist. I have lost a mentor, dear friend, and colleague."

A nomination letter for the John Marshall Award described Judge Holloway:

Potentially more important than legal reforms was the impact that Judge Holloway had on all who came into contact with him. Judge Holloway was famed for his even temper and treating everyone with respect. He is generally regarded as the force behind the Tenth Circuit's traditional collegiality. He never talked about how hard he worked; he just did it.

Andrew M. Coats, former Dean of the University of Oklahoma Law School, was quoted as saying:

He was one of my mentors and a splendid advocate. His kindness and courtesy to all were extraordinary in those days of rough-and-tumble litigation. Judge Holloway is a man of great integrity who never lets even a hint of favoritism arise in his court. Perhaps more important than his dedication to our judicial system, is the way Judge Holloway treats those who come before his court. He is a gentleman.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote in a letter to Gentry: "Legions of judges and lawyers will continue to be guided by your father's sage judgments. He was a prince of a man and the very best among jurists. May you carry on in life and health just as your father would have willed."

Judge Stephanie Seymour observed that Judge Holloway was as concerned with the lowliest prisoner or poorest plaintiff as he was with the most prominent citizen or wealthiest corporation. He treated every person with utmost kindness and respect.

When Reverend Brian Bakeman served as the director of finance at St. Luke's, one of his fondest memories was of Judge Holloway coming

to his office in December and *tongue in cheek* asked what his taxes were for the church. He would often say that his pledge to the church was one of the ways to do right and just things for the world.

The second expectation of the Lord is to *love mercy*. In a 1998 proceeding honoring Judge Holloway's 30 years of service, someone said to him:

I learned from you that disagreement should never be synonymous with disagreeable. Ever gracious and courteous, you have *shaped the culture of the court* into one of friendly concern for the welfare of each judge and staff member and a respectful audience for divergent views. Your lovely, tender soul makes us all want to be better and to reach higher than habit would otherwise lead us.

Long-time friends Pam and Jack Williams remember when their son Matt was circumcised. They videotaped the event, which included a shot of the Judge wearing a yarmulke, grimacing throughout the ceremony. Afterwards, he told them that it was much easier to become a Methodist.

Reverend David Poteet recalls sending out letters saying that he would be in the chapel during a particular time and inviting members to join him in prayer. Partway through one of those prayer times, an older gentleman came in and introduced himself. It was Judge Holloway. For a while he and Dave sat in silent prayer. After praying they chatted and got better acquainted. Bill's cousin Margaret says that he could talk to a brick wall and, when he was through, would know how much mortar there was and the name of the mason and his family.

When Gentry was in college, during one particularly difficult semester, she got a grade she wasn't proud of and felt she needed to tell her dad. Instead of advice or criticism, he said, "Don't worry, it's okay. It will build character." He then told her he had once gotten a C or D in a class. His mercy made it possible for his daughter to know that, no matter what, she was loved deeply by her father.

His compassion and mercy were endless. When grandson Josh chipped a tooth, Judge Holloway asked about it for months. When there were fires on the Canadian border, hundreds of miles away from Gentry's home, he called to warn her to stay safe. His kindness extended to his court family, especially surviving spouses—calling frequently to check on their well-being. In his final days, he worried about being, or

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leaving, a burden for anyone else. He wanted to take care of things as long as he possibly could—and he did.

The third expectation in *Micah* is to *walk humbly with God*. After a hip replacement surgery, he was back at work within the week. His surgeon may not have known about that. Rather than wait until he could use a cane, he arranged to have one of his clerks meet him with a wheelchair after a ride in a borrowed station wagon.

One plane trip through the Denver airport revealed his equanimity. Judge Holloway had not been feeling well, and Judge Robert Henry secured a wheelchair for him. As he wheeled Judge Holloway through security checkpoints, a TSA officer decided that this frail 80-plus-year-old federal judge should be pulled aside for a security check. He was asked to get out of the wheelchair and raise his leg with his cane. He did everything with a smile while Judge Henry silently seethed. They moved on to the gate, and Judge Holloway acted as though nothing had happened.

Judge Robert E. Bacharach remembers: “He is deeply revered by all of us who know him. Along with my father, Judge Holloway is the finest man I have ever known.”

President Barack Obama extended his caring to Judge Holloway’s family, saying, “My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. I hope that you will be consoled by the memories of your time with Bill and comforted by the presence of friends and family.”

Bill knew the names of virtually every employee in the courthouse, as well as the names of their spouses and often their children. He never forgot the birthday of a clerk or secretary.

Bill Paul once said to him, “You are a role model for us all. May the Lord multiply your kind.”

Former United States Supreme Court Justice Byron White described him as the most considerate person he’d known.

My personal experience with Judge Holloway began five years ago in the intimate moments we shared planning a memorial service for his son, Bill. His love and compassion for his son, his friends, and his family was amazing, as was the deep pain he felt at this loss. In the years since, we’ve spent many hours together and eaten many Boulevard Cafeteria lunches. I find peace in my soul knowing that some of the questions Judge Holloway wrestled with the last few years have been answered. For I believe that just as his adoring parents entered their eternal life surrounded by the love of God, so did his son at the instant of his death. I

also believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that father and son have exchanged a holy embrace of healing and reunion. For that, I am grateful. For faith, hope, and love abide, and the greatest of these is love. Eternal love is a truth and a promise.

In the 1931 memory books of the Governor's Mansion, First Lady Kim Henry found this letter:

January the twelfth, 1931
Master William J. Holloway, Jr.
Oklahoma City, OK

My Dear Son:

In a few minutes the time will arrive when I shall retire from the office of Governor of Oklahoma. I am herewith writing you the last instrument or message which I shall sign while I am Governor.

Occupying the office of Governor has been both a tremendous responsibility and an opportunity for service. I sincerely hope that when you have grown to be a man that you and your mother can look back with pride upon the two years of my administration. I have earnestly sought to give the people of Oklahoma an honest and efficient administration of the state's business. Not for any consideration in the world would I have knowingly done anything that would bring the slightest discredit to you and your mother and the family name. I hope that both of you can always feel that my public service has been a real credit to you, to myself, and to the people of Oklahoma.

In conclusion, permit me to say to you, my son, that my prayer and greatest ambition is that you may have good health and live to become a useful and upright citizen. To the accomplishment of this high purpose for you I shall devote my life. I am as proud of you as it is possible for a father to be of a son.

Wishing for you a long life full of happiness and useful achievement, and with all my love, I am,

Your devoted father,
William Judson Holloway
Governor.

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Our friend, the Honorable William Judson Holloway, Jr., has led a long life of happiness, useful achievement, and has fulfilled the hope of his father and the call of his Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER

God, grant us grace today. Help us remember that the love shared between friends and family never really dies but evolves into an expression of eternal love at the moment that our human existence ends. Teach us that in death we, too, will discover the truth of the resurrection, the ultimate and full healing of all struggles, and that we will be enfolded into the eternal love of God just as Judge Holloway was at the very instant of his death on Friday, April 25th.

God, grant us grace that in the pain of loss, we discover comfort, and in the sorrow of change, we find hope. In remembering the love shared between friends and family, we discover joy. In death we, too, will discover resurrection.

*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Reverend Linda Brinkworth, Leading in the Service
Pastor of Congregational Care
St. Luke's United Methodist Church