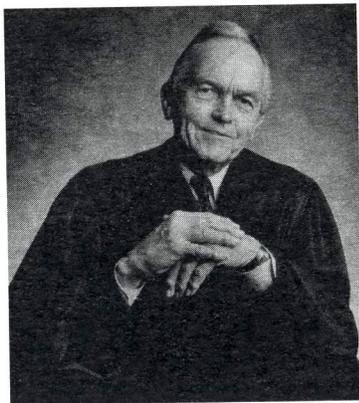


Harlington Wood Jr.



Born to Life: April 17th, 1920
At Rest: December 29th, 2008

Bury me toward the draw,
under the big oaks, near the old dog's
grave.

The land should hold its claim on me.

Sprinkle me with tears.

Cradle my memory as if holding
a newborn.

Mark my path.

Whisper my name to coming generations
as you follow my tracks
across the prairie.

MEMORIAL FOR HARLINGTON WOOD, JR.
Seventh Circuit Judicial Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana
May 18, 2009

Remarks by Judge William J. Bauer

It is both easy and difficult to say a few words of Harlington Wood, Jr. – easy because it is almost impossible to exaggerate when talking about his life, and difficult because there is simply too much to cover, too much to describe, in any reasonable period of time.

Harlington Wood's own short assessment of his biography, apart from his four years in the military and his services as a lawyer and judge, roughly abbreviated:

Captain, University of Illinois, Polo Team, 1941-1942;

Private Pilot;

Vice President, Abraham Lincoln Association;

Former Member of Illinois Crime Investigating Commission, and Member of Board of Directors of Illinois Bureau of Race Track Police;

Brigadier General, Seventh Cavalry (reactivated), Illinois State Militia.

That analysis doesn't even hit the high spots.

But let me begin.

Psychologists have made note of a human characteristic called “habit of command.” It’s noticed very early in young people; the boy or girl to whom companions turn when the question is “what do we do now?”. It is not just searching for ways to have fun, but when a crisis arrives, when the unexpected occurs and when people, young or old, have to make an immediate response. And they turn time and again to the same individual upon whom, for all sorts of reasons, they have come to rely. Harlington Wood was an almost perfect example of a man who early on demonstrated his ability to accept responsibility and to do it unbelievably well – the habit of command.

When Harlington Wood and I were growing up – he was just a few years older than I – there were no Superman role models – no Batman, no Spiderman, no more-than-human role models. But there were young and older fictional heroes – Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, Frank Merryweather, and the like. They were the ones we aspired to be like: brave, resourceful, kind, trustworthy; born leaders, confident, but not arrogant; brave, but not foolish, and having a love of God, country and their fellow man.

The vast majority of us simply aspired to such virtues. Harlington Wood had them in Spades.

And, on top of his great acts of courage, he was a great father, a loving husband, a loyal friend, and he was the greatest public servant I ever met – and over a period or more than fifty-five years of my own public service, I have met many great, and not so great, public servants.

There was one weakness I noticed in Harlington Wood; he had great difficulty in saying no when he was asked for help, advice or to take on an incredibly difficult assignment. I was afraid that he was being taken advantage of, but he didn't think so.

And for the last thirty-five years, he was one of America's truly great judges. It is worth mentioning that no one who knew Woodie was surprised at that.

Among his truly great talents was his ability to make friends and really love and care about them. As one of those who benefitted from his marvelous capacity to care, I know in some measure what his wife, children and grandchildren have lost; not as immediately or as deeply as I know they feel, but those of us who lost a loving and loyal friend will never be the same.

As Hamlet said of his father, “(Woodie) was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again” – and that is the pity and the sorrow of his death.

I shall not go into the details of his incredible life and his exploits; those are the subject of dozens of news stories and at least three books have touched on them. It is enough to note in passing that he served with distinction in both the European and Pacific Theaters; that he had been around the world three times; that he is the only man I know who went from one end to the other on the Trans-Siberian Railroad and stayed in the famous Treehouse Hotel in Africa. As I said, he was a man of great passion and adventure; a man who wore the habit of command with love and mastery. Go elsewhere for the details; they take longer in the telling than I have been allotted the time to tell, but they are worth exploring.

And the world is poorer for his passing . . . Goodbye, my dear friend.