

Memorial Resolution of the Bar Association of the Seventh
Federal Circuit at Its Annual Meeting, May 14, 1984

JUDGE JOSEPH SAM PERRY

Judge Joseph Sam Perry was born in Carbon Hill, Alabama, on November 30, 1896, the son of a coal miner. He taught grammar school in Alabama to support himself while he was attending high school, and he worked on local farms and in coal mines while growing up. He served in the Navy during World War I and participated in the unique events of the American landing forces in Northern Russia in 1918 and in the Near East in 1919. After service, he returned home to finish high school and attend the University of Alabama, where he graduated in 1923 having earned membership in Phi Beta Kappa. He believed he wanted a career in social service and obtained a fellowship which helped him on his way to a master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago in 1925. But, while at Chicago, he became interested in the law and took his law degree at the University of Chicago in 1927. He practiced in Chicago briefly and then settled and practiced in Wheaton, Illinois where he also became a Master in Chancery.

Judge Perry was a member of the Illinois General Assembly from 1937 through 1943 while he continued to practice law in Wheaton. In 1951 he became a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois. He retired from the bench on December 31, 1983 and died at age 87 on February 18, 1984, having served for 32 years as a federal judge. He was survived by his wife, Nellie, son, John, daughter, Maribeth Cunningham, and six brothers and sisters.

Judge Perry presided over the longest federal court jury trial in the nation's history, the 18 month civil rights case against law enforcement officials involved in the 1969 Black Panthers raid. Judge Perry was always deeply devoted to his work as a judge, so much so that he volunteered quite regularly for the duty as emergency judge, for example, during these meetings. It is demonstrative of Judge Perry's abilities and rapport with people that he was very successful in politics as a life-long Democrat in DuPage County, one of the most solidly Republican counties in the nation. Judge Perry served five terms in the state legislature and served as House floor leader for the late Governor Horner.

Surely, Judge Perry's principal characteristic was his pervasive, warm kindness. As Judge Marovitz, who sat with him for over 30 years on the same bench, aptly said, "For being such a kind and gentle man, he left his mark on everything he did."

About 20 years ago, Judge Perry started to develop an unusual expertise when he discovered on the grounds of his own Wheaton home the skeleton of a mastodon some 10,000 to 25,000 years old. He excavated some 75 bones and soon made himself quite learned in that area of paleontology. He also successfully fended off some county officials who claimed that the bones belonged to the county, and he finally gave them to Wheaton College for public display there.

We are grateful for the devoted and distinguished service that Judge Joseph Sam Perry gave throughout his life to the cause of justice; and we are grateful for the kind, gentle and friendly example of his lifetime conduct toward all of us.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE SEVENTH FEDERAL
CIRCUIT HELD AT INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA ON
TUESDAY, MAY 15, 1984

The meeting of the Board of Governors and Committee Chairmen of the Bar Association of the Seventh Federal Circuit was called to order at noon on Tuesday, May 15, 1984, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel pursuant to call by the President and notice from the Secretary.

Present were:

Officers: Joseph B. Carney, President; Mark Crane, First Vice President; John S. Skilton, Second Vice President; Dale E. Ihlenfeldt, Treasurer.

Board of Governors: Francis J. Demet, Carl D. Overman, Howard A. Pollack.

Past Presidents: Sigmund J. Beck, Jerry P. Belknap, Irvin B. Charne, Edward A. Haight, Robert C. Keck, Thomas M. Scanlon, Theodore R. Scott, Glenn O. Starke, Karl J. Stipher, Robert C. Williams, James C. Wood, Harold R. Woodard.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Administration of Justice: Lloyd A. Barbee, Wisconsin Chairman.

Bankruptcy Law and Procedure: Louis W. Levit, General Chairman.

Circuit Rider: John C. McNett, Indiana Chairman.