



William Lee Wilks

November 12, 1931 - February 24, 2015

William Lee Wilks, born on November 12, 1931 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, passed away on February 24, 2015 in Houston, Texas where he lived for more than 20 years. He was a loving husband, father, and friend to many, and his insatiable intellectual curiosity and zest for life inspired those around him.

Dean Wilks earned his bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1952, and his lifelong love of the law began with earning his Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan School of Law in 1955. He was licensed to practice law in Indiana and Michigan and was a member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court. After practicing law in Fort Wayne, Indiana from 1957 to 1970, he became Professor of Law and later Dean at The Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, also being awarded an honorary doctorate from that institution in 1987. Dean Wilks also earned his Master's in Law degree, with highest honors, from the George Washington University National Law Center in 1973. In addition he was the Official Reporter for the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania from 1974 to 1989. He relocated to Houston, Texas in 1989, serving as President and Dean of South Texas College of Law from 1989 to 1995, and then continuing as Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law. He remained a much-loved Professor of Law up until the time of his passing.

In addition to his academic career, Dean Wilks chaired the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Special Task Force to Study the Tort System, helped draft

Pennsylvania's revised Motor Vehicle Code, was a consultant to the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, past chair of the Independent Law School Committee of the American Bar Association, and a law school inspector for the American Bar Association. He was a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and a member of the Garland R. Walker American Inn of Court, as well as a member of a number of other professional associations.

Dean Wilks was a frequent guest lecturer. Some of his speaking engagements included universities in Canada, Italy, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. He also spoke at various colleges and universities, assorted governmental entities, and bar association programs. His numerous articles, papers, and other writings appeared in many legal journals and periodicals. In addition, Dean Wilks was a past board member of Gulf Coast Legal Services, WITF Public Broadcasting, Cumberland County Children's Services, and Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, past president of the United Way of Greater Carlisle, and a past member of the Downtown Houston Association and the Special Texas A&M Committee to Examine Graduate Education in the Rio Grande Valley.

Dean Wilks is survived by his wife Nancy Goldberg Wilks, daughters Sara Balzarini, Margaret Hertzler, Amy Goodridge, son David Wilks, daughters Ariel Wilks and Cordelia Wilks, eleven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by his mother and father, Lee and Mildred Wilks, sister Judith Wilks, and brother John Wilks.

A Memorial Service honoring the life of Dean Wilks will be held on March 20, 2015 at 3 p.m. at Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1900 Bering Drive, Houston, Texas. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the William L. Wilks Memorial Fund, South Texas College of Law, 1303 San Jacinto Street, Houston, Texas 77002.