



A TRIBUTE TO EUGENE E. DERRYBERRY (1942 – 2007)
January 8, 2008
Roanoke, Virginia

We remember our good friend and colleague, Gene Derryberry.

INASMUCH as Gene's memory is indelibly lodged in the hearts and minds of all of us whose lives he touched and influenced, it is fitting at this time and place and in the presence of his colleagues that the Roanoke Bar Association honor this very special man.

INASMUCH as Eugene E. Derryberry was born on October 31, 1942, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and grew up in his beloved Signal Mountain, Tennessee; and

INASMUCH as Gene entered Duke University in 1960 as an Angier B. Duke scholar and received his bachelor's degree in 1964, graduating with honors; and

CONSIDERING that following his graduation from college, Gene was commissioned an officer in the United States Navy and served aboard the U.S.S. Fort Snelling in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea; and

CONSIDERING that upon completion of his Navy service, Gene entered Duke University Law School where he served as a member of the Duke Law Journal and received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1970 and thereafter began practicing law at the firm of Hunton & Williams in Richmond, Virginia; and

INASMUCH as Gene moved to Roanoke in 1973 to join Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, where he was instrumental in the development and growth of that firm's business practice for 34 years; and

INASMUCH as Gene was widely known for his intellect and abilities as a lawyer, having been repeatedly selected by his peers as one of the "Best Lawyers in America" and included among "Virginia's Legal Elite." Inquisitive beyond curiosity and particularly creative, Gene excelled at fashioning workable solutions to the most complicated legal problems; and

CONSIDERING Gene's many and lasting contributions to his community, having long served on the board of directors of CHIP (Child Health Investment Partnership), as a long-term member of the board of directors of the Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley, on the board of directors of Total Action Against Poverty, and as a beloved Barrister Book Buddy to the 2nd grade students at Morningside Elementary School from the inception of this significant program until his last year; and

INASMUCH as Gene was an involved member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke where he sang in the choir and served for many years on its board of directors; and

INASMUCH as Gene was a faithful husband to his best friend and wife of 33 years, Joanne, an attentive and proud father of his sons, Jonathan and Wesley, and a loving brother to his sister Kay and his brother George; and

CONSIDERING that Gene never took anything for granted and appreciated everyone and everything just for what they were, without prejudice or pretense. Gene understood what was important in this life and what was not, and made time for the things that bring joy – music, family, children, dogs, fine wine, and roller coasters, but especially music. When Gene would sing and play his guitar, everything in the world was made alright; and

INASMUCH as Gene faced adversity with grace, without even a whimper of complaint. This gentle soul accepted his disease and made it an equal partner in an experiment that lasted 11 years. Gene learned much from that, but taught us more; and

CONSIDERING that Gene was an unabashed grammarian who loved clear, concise writing and abhorred verbosity in any shape or form, and who quickly admonished those whose grammar and style failed to meet his high standards; and

INASMUCH as Gene was both complex and simple, with interests that were broad, deep and often contradictory. Gene loved life and all that it brought. He was genuinely interested in the lives of others, particularly his colleagues and their family members. Gene was also an admirer and collector of things unique, interesting, relevant and beautiful, each with its own intrinsic value different from the rest. These are the same attributes that made Gene so special; and

CONSIDERING that Gene exemplified everything good in each of us and what we all hope to become. It is his goodness that we will remember; and

INASMUCH as Gene Derryberry epitomized what it means to be a lawyer by incorporating into his daily life the principles that are the foundation of the legal profession – civility, fairness, compassion and professionalism;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Roanoke Bar Association remember the passing of Eugene E. Derryberry and hold dear and in the highest regard his memory and his many contributions to his family, this community, the Roanoke Bar Association, the Virginia State Bar, The Virginia Bar Association, and to the promotion of the Rule of Law that permits freedom and justice for all;

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be furnished to the Circuit Courts of the City and County of Roanoke, the City of Salem and the County of Montgomery, as well as the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division, with motions that this resolution be spread upon the permanent common law order books of those courts; and that copies of this resolution be furnished to Eugene E. Derryberry's wife and sons to communicate the esteem in which the Roanoke Bar Association holds Gene and his memory and the Association's sorrow in his passing.

GIVEN under the hands of the President and Secretary of the Roanoke Bar Association and the seal of the Association this 8th day of January 2008.

President, Roanoke Bar Association

TESTE:

Secretary, Roanoke Bar Association