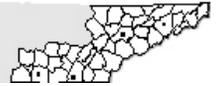




Court Historical Society NEWSLETTER



Eastern District of Tennessee

MAY 2007



Marshal Montgomery



Judge Taylor

Threat On A Judge

The value of the oral history program of the Court Historical Society increases as time passes. We interviewed U.S. Marshal Bruce Montgomery for a review of his career in June 1993, a few months before he retired. Montgomery, who went on to become sheriff of Sevier County, died three months ago. One of his special assignments during his career as marshal was to lead a seven-month-long security watch on the late U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor in 1981, at a time before there was any court security as we know it today. A summary of his account of that project is given here, along with interspersed recollections of your editor, who was chief deputy clerk of the court at that time and had a close working relationship with Judge Taylor.

In mid-1981, the Marshals Service received information that two men who were being held in Knox County Jail awaiting trial had tried to hire someone to kill **Judge Taylor**. The two were convicted felons charged with possessing a cache of unregistered firearms and were considered dangerous. A witness in the case had been wounded in a shooting in Chattanooga, so because of the threat on the witness's life, the Marshals Service determined that the tip regarding Judge Taylor was valid. As a result, they placed extra security on the judge. "It lasted seven months," Montgomery said. "We guarded him 24 hours a day. We didn't tell him where the threat came from; he just knew there was a threat."

"We worked 12-hour shifts. We set up in the area at the back of his house," Montgomery said. "There was a little place back there where we could have a communications setup and a little refrigerator."

Montgomery recalled a frightening incident that occurred near the judge's home at about 3 o'clock one morning. "An old car drove up with no lights on, and I thought the time had come that the threat was going to be carried out," he said. Nothing happened, though. The car stayed where it was for a few minutes, then went on. "We didn't do anything about it. I figured it was a burglar or somebody picking up a fellow burglar."

No one knew that the deputy marshals were staying at the judge's house at first, but eventually, the neighbors did learn, Montgomery said.

The two men were tried and convicted, and on the day that they were sentenced, about 15 officers were stationed at

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PRESERVING IMPORTANT PAPERS--Leslie Hull, left, looks through a few of the papers that were in the chambers of her father, retired senior U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull. The papers have been transferred to the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy in Knoxville and will be donated to the Center to be used by future researchers and academics. Bobby R. Holt, right, director of the center's archives, looks on. With them in the background is Don K. Ferguson, executive director of the U.S. District Court Historical Society, who coordinated the transfer of the papers to the Baker Center. The boxes shown here are only a portion of the entire collection, which came from four filing cabinets in Judge Hull's chambers in Greeneville and filled 31 boxes.

A Society Goal

Promoting and overseeing the donation of important court papers to history repositories is one of the missions of the Court Historical Society. It was with this goal in mind that the Society coordinated the recent transfer of retired **U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull's** papers to the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy.



Judge Hull

Since the formation of the Society in 1993, we have arranged for the papers of a number of judges to be placed with various historical collections in East Tennessee. Judge Hull's papers, which were removed from his former chambers in April by Baker Center staff members and transported to the Baker Center in Knoxville, filled 31 boxes. They

contain a wide variety of documents. A partial listing follows:

Judicial Conference correspondence, letters to other judges, documents relating to renovation of the old federal courthouse and construction of the new federal courthouse, memorandums relating to court security, jury instructions, judgeship surveys, case assignments, memorial committee notes, files on weddings he performed and numerous other documents. ■

Threat On A Judge *continued from page 1*

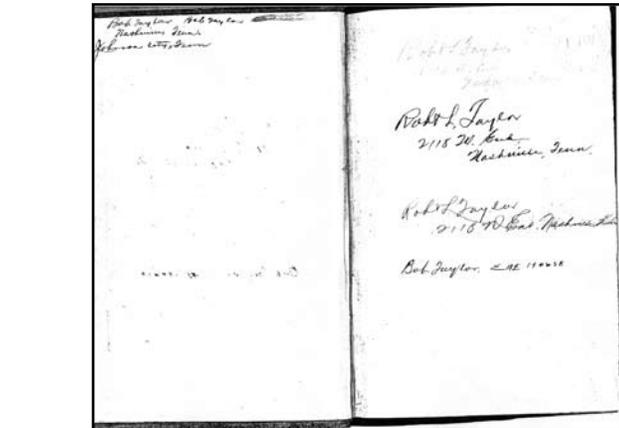
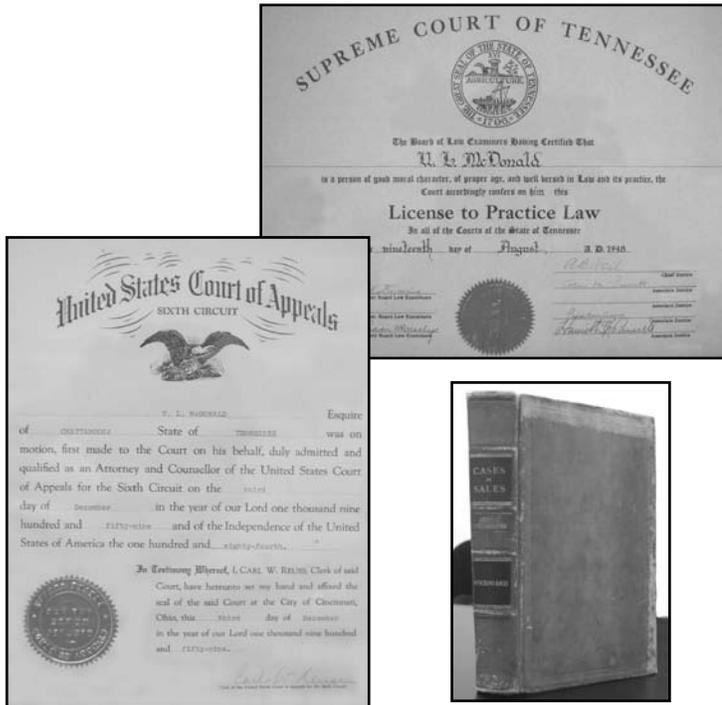
various places in the courtroom, some wearing bulletproof vests. During those days, there were no security officers at the courthouse doors or in the courtrooms, and magnetometers were not in use in the courthouses. Such security didn't come along until the mid-1980s.

Each defendant was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

During this period of guarding the judge, the marshals drove Judge Taylor to and from work, and a deputy marshal sat all day at a desk that was placed in the hall outside his chambers.

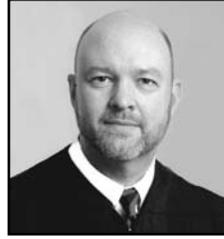
Montgomery recalled a humorous incident that occurred during that time. One of the Marshals Service's vehicles was a Dodge Ram truck. "One day, Judge Taylor looked out his chambers window and saw the truck parked in his parking space behind the courthouse. He called me in and wanted to know who was in his parking space." Since Judge Taylor wasn't driving his car to and from work, the marshals had taken over the space, which had a sign on it marking it as the judge's space.

"I told him it was ours. He said, 'Well, it's muddy and dirty; put it somewhere else.' He didn't want people to think that big, dirty truck was his," Montgomery said. ■



History For Sale

Historical documents sometimes come from the most unlikely places, as the story behind the items shown below confirms. The old book was found in a flea market, and the two certificates showed up for sale on eBay on the Internet.



Judge Wright

The book belonged to the late **U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor** when he was a student at Vanderbilt University in 1922 and 1923, during the period when his father, **Alf Taylor**, was governor of Tennessee, 1921-23. **Circuit Judge Tom Wright** of Greeneville bought the book at a flea market in Elizabethton about 12 years ago when he saw the inscriptions inside the cover: "Robert L. Taylor, 2118 W. End, Nashville, Tenn." and "Bob Taylor, SAE." Also "Bob Taylor, Johnson City, Tenn." The Nashville address was that of the official residence of the governor at that time. The Taylor family was from Johnson City. The book bears many notes written in the margins and a number of text underlinings made by student Taylor. The handwriting is very familiar to those who knew Judge Taylor in his judicial career. He served the Eastern District of Tennessee from 1949-1985.

Judge Wright recalls that he paid about \$2 for the book and said he bought it because, "When I saw the name, I thought that it might be the judge." Judge Wright used the book mainly for office decoration all these years. It occurred to him recently that it ought to be donated to the Court Historical Society for preservation, and he has done so. Judge Wright, a member of the Society, served as a law clerk for **U.S. District Judge Thomas Gray Hull** from mid-1985 to mid-1986.

The book is titled "Cases on the Law of Sales of Goods, Selected from Decisions of English and American Courts." It was published by West Publishing Co. in 1913.

The two certificates were among items purchased by a Roswell, Georgia, man about five years ago in an estate sale in Chattanooga. A supporter of the Court Historical Society, **Libbie McBee Haynes**, an antique dealer and an advisory board member of the Farragut Folklife Museum in Knox County, saw them advertised for sale on eBay and contacted your executive director to see if the Court Historical Society would be interested in acquiring them.

They belonged to Chattanooga lawyer **U.L. McDonald**, who died in 1987. One is his License to Practice Law, conferred on him by the Tennessee Supreme Court on August 19, 1948, and the other is his certificate of admission to practice in the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Sixth Circuit, dated December 3, 1959.

The Society purchased the framed documents, in part because of the signatures on them. The Tennessee Supreme Court certificate is signed by then-**Chief Justice A.B. Neil** of Nashville; and **Associate Justices Alan M. Prewitt** of Grand Junction; **Frank H. Gailor** of Memphis but born in Sewanee; **Pride Tomlinson** of Murray County; and **Hamilton S. Burnett** of Knoxville. It cost the Society \$40.

The Court of Appeals certificate was signed by then-**Clerk Carl W. Reuss**. It cost \$10.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE, INC.

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