



Court Historical Society NEWSLETTER *Eastern District of Tennessee*



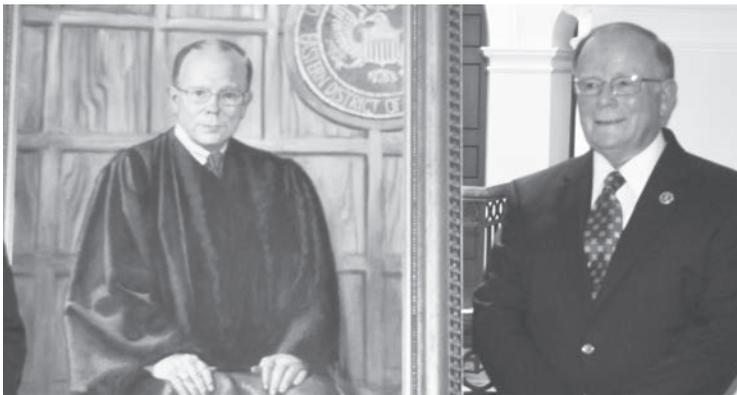
AUGUST 2013

Judge Phillips Retires

It is a milestone anytime a judge leaves office, but it is particularly significant in the case of **U.S. District Judge Thomas W. Phillips**, who took inactive senior status on July 31. He is the only judge in this district to have served both as a magistrate judge and as an Article III judge.

Judge Phillips served as a magistrate judge from 1991 to 2002 and as a district judge from 2002 to 2013.

A portrait of Judge Phillips was unveiled at a ceremony in the courtyard of the Howard H. Baker Jr. U.S. Courthouse on July 11. It was painted by artist John Woodrow Kelley of Knoxville and New York.



Judge Phillips with Portrait

TVA and Court Art

A recent paper by a Pennsylvania educator examines the role that the advent of the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933 had on artwork in federal courthouses and post offices in this region, including two of those in the Eastern District of Tennessee.

TVA power was the theme of the 1930s and 1940s artists who produced artwork for those buildings, including the Chattanooga federal courthouse and the old federal courthouse in Greeneville, wrote **Dr. Lisa K. Dorrill**, who teaches art and art history at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

She visited both courthouses in the summer of 2012 in preparation for writing the paper, which she has since presented at several art conferences.

The paper is titled "TVA Power: Promoting the Tennessee Valley Authority in New Deal Murals." In it, Dr. Dorrill considers how artists--who were generally not from the

A Discovery

In our search for information about portraits of judges that are displayed in our courthouses, we found, with the help of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, a newspaper clipping, dated October 13, 1971, about the unveiling of the portrait of the late **U.S. District Judge Leslie R. Darr**, who served in Chattanooga from 1939 to 1961 and as a senior judge until his death in 1967.

The photograph below accompanied the newspaper story. From the left, those admiring the portrait are **U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor**; **U.S. District Judge Frank W. Wilson**; **Raymond R. Murphy**, then-president of the Chattanooga Bar Association; **Mrs. Katharine Darr Hastings**, Judge Darr's daughter; **J. Ernest Darr**, the judge's brother; and **U.S. District Judge Charles G. Neese**. The four judges pictured here, all now deceased, were the only federal judges in the district at that time.



[EDITOR'S NOTE--Until the discovery of the 1971 newspaper article that this picture accompanied, the Court Historical Society archives had no information about the unveiling of the Judge Darr portrait. The Society's archives do contain, however, information about all unveilings of judge portraits that have occurred in this district since then.]

Tennessee Valley--promoted positive views of the TVA in line with New Deal thinking. "By analyzing what these artists portrayed, as well as what they omitted, we gain new insights into conflicting attitudes towards the environment, the South, and New Deal policies," Dr. Dorrill said.

"Ignoring criticism of the TVA from electric power companies and from displaced families, New Deal artists instead presented impressive views" of various aspects of TVA, including dams, phosphate mining that produced fertilizers, the waters of the Tennessee River, and transmission towers and electrical substations, Dr. Dorrill wrote.

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TVA and Court Art

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In the mural “Allegory of Chattanooga,” installed in the Chattanooga federal courthouse in 1937, Dr. Dorrill said artist **Hilton Leech**, of Sarasota, Florida, illustrated the region’s history through “homesteaders planting and plowing fields...and Civil War nurses tending to fallen soldiers,” and at the same time the artist addressed the future of the region, symbolizing the hope for the future “with an array of electric towers, wires and transformers.”

Regarding the art pieces in the Greeneville federal courthouse, “The Resources of Nature” and “Man Power,” carved in 1940, New York artist **William Zorach** emphasized the contrast of a primitive past and modern future in a pair of carved teakwood panels titled “Resources of Nature,” Dr. Dorrill wrote.

One of the carvings shows a barefooted woman holding a child with a natural waterfall in the background, while a second panel shows a bare-chested man with a shovel and depicts a man-made waterfall representing Norris Dam, TVA’s first hydroelectric facility.



Allegory of Chattanooga



The Resources of Nature



Man Power

Other artwork studied by Dr. Dorrill for her paper includes murals in buildings that serve or formerly serve as post offices in five Tennessee cities--Newport, Lenoir City, LaFollette, Crossville, Columbia--and the federal courthouse in Hunstville, Alabama, all bearing a TVA-influenced theme.

The mural painted in 1934 on the ceiling of the former U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Knoxville, which now houses the Tennessee appellate courts, was not included in Dr. Dorrill’s study, she said, because it appears that artist John von Wicht’s emphasis was on justice rather than a specific New Deal program.

[EDITOR’S NOTE--These art pieces have been pictured in previous issues of this newsletter but are being presented again to accompany the article about Dr. Dorrill’s study.]

Recent books about cases tried in the Eastern District of Tennessee:

With All Deliberate Speed -- About the trial that brought about the desegregation of the Knoxville city schools in the 1960s, by **Dr. Fred Bedelle Jr.**, retired superintendent of the former city school system. The cost is \$25. Distributed by Lakeside Books, P.O. Box 31197, Knoxville, TN 37930. www.withalldeliberatespeed.com.

The Snail Darter and the Dam -- About the trial in which opponents of the Tellico Dam project sought to stop the Tennessee Valley Authority from building the dam. The threatened extinction of a tiny fish, the snail darter, was at the heart of the dispute. By **Zygmunt J.B. Plater**, former University of Tennessee law professor now on the faculty of Boston College Law School. The cost is \$32.50. Yale University Press.

Copies of *Justice in the Valley* are still available. The book is about the Eastern District of Tennessee, from its beginning on up through the mid-1990s. By **Dr. Patricia Brake**. The cost is \$25, plus \$4 postage, and it is available through the Court Historical Society. (Please see address elsewhere in this newsletter.)

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