

Memorial Resolution

THE HONORABLE CHARLES D. SUSANO, JR.

JUNE 14, 2023

Judge Charles D. “Charlie” Susano, Jr. was born on March 24, 1936, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He passed away peacefully at his home on May 7, 2022. He lived eighty-six extraordinary years. Left to mourn his passing and celebrate his life are his wife, Carolyn; his children, Stephen and wife Ana, Maria, and Charles III and wife Robin; Preston Warren, who he loved like his own, and wife Lynn; his six grandchildren, Sophia, Jacob, Madison, Sydney, Hanna, and Hudson; his brother Tommy; his brother-in-law David King and wife Jennifer; and a host of friends.

Always prayerful and faithful, Judge Susano relied on God to steer his path. His early values were formed and honed by his Catholic upbringing, first at home, then at Knoxville Catholic High School where he was the captain of the school’s 1954 championship basketball team. Judge Susano loved cheering for his beloved alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1958 with a major in accounting. He could always be found, and often heard, in front of the TV on fall football Saturdays cheering for the Irish. He also cheered for the University of Tennessee Volunteers, but only when the Vols were not playing the Irish.

Drafted into the United States Army in 1958, Judge Susano was honorably discharged in 1960 and moved back to Knoxville to enroll in the University of Tennessee College of Law where he was an outstanding student. He was a member of the Tennessee Law Review and graduated Order of the Coif in 1963. He then served in the inaugural group of law clerks to the Tennessee Supreme Court, clerking for Chief Justice Hamilton S. Burnett.

Judge Susano had a successful legal career in private practice for thirty years in Knoxville, first at Bernstein, Susano & Stair and later at Susano, Sheppard, Giordano & Swanson. His legal career took a momentous turn in March 1994 when Governor Ned Ray McWherter appointed him to the Tennessee Court of

Appeals. Subsequently, he was elected to the Court of Appeals on a statewide ballot in 1994 and then again in 1998, 2006, and 2014. He served as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals from 2013 to 2015. He retired April 30, 2020, as one of Tennessee's longest-serving appellate judges and with a prolific body of work. He participated in over 3,000 cases and authored over 1,000 well-reasoned and well-written opinions.

Guided by his strong Catholic faith, Judge Susano's remarkable life and career were even more extraordinary because for the last thirty years of his life, he was confined to a wheelchair after a sleepwalking accident left him paralyzed from the chest down. He never considered himself handicapped, saying, "I'm only handicapped if I let myself be. At worst, I have been challenged, forcing me to reinvent new ways to negotiate the new times." Beneath his warm smile and cheerful bearing was incredible grit and determination. Judge Susano endured many obstacles and challenges and never allowed his paralysis to define him.

Judge Susano served on the Tennessee Supreme Court's Advisory Commission on the Rules of Practice and Procedure. He served his community on numerous nonprofit boards and in many capacities at his beloved Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some of the numerous honors and recognitions he received were the Tennessee Bar Association's Justice Frank F. Drowota III Outstanding Judicial Service Award, the Appellate Judge of the Year Award from the Tennessee Chapter of ABOTA, and the KBA's Courage in the Face of Adversity Award.

Micah 6:8 tells us to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. It is a call to do justice from hearts of mercy and compassion, marked by the humility of Christ. Judge Susano fulfilled this Biblical command through his service to his church, his family, the judiciary, and the State. Today, we mourn the passing of Judge Susano but celebrate his exceptional life and the lasting legacy of faith, ethics, and core values he left behind.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that the foregoing Memorial Resolution in honor of Judge Charles D. "Charlie" Susano, Jr. be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to the West

Publishing Company for inclusion in Tennessee Decisions, and BE IT FURTHER
RESOLVED that copies thereof be furnished to members of his family.

Respectfully submitted this 14th day of June, 2023.

Sharon G. Lee

Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court