



## CIRCUIT COURT

STATE OF TENNESSEE

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

May 15, 2026

S. CURTIS ROSE  
CIRCUIT JUDGE

OLD CITY HALL BUILDING  
225 W. CENTER STREET  
KINGSPORT, TN 37660  
OFF. (423) 224-1728  
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The Honorable JoeDae Jenkins  
140 Adams Avenue, Room 308  
Memphis, TN 38103

Re: Memorial Resolution for John S. McLellan, III

Dear Chancellor Jenkins:

As presiding judge of the Second Judicial District and upon request from the Memorial Resolution Committee and the Tennessee Judicial Conference (TJC), it is my honor to provide the following summary of Judge McLellan's life for the purposes of establishing the Memorial Resolution to be read into the record on June 10, 2026 as part of the Annual Judicial Conference.

As such, I will be honored to present this Memorial Resolution on that date.

The Honorable John Sidney McLellan III, devoted husband, father, grandfather, and distinguished member of the Tennessee judiciary, passed away after a life marked by service, integrity, and dedication to his family, community, and the law.

Judge McLellan was born on January 16, 1946, to John S. McLellan, Attorney at Law, and Opal P. McLellan. He grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, alongside his sister, Toni M. Cave. He graduated from Dobyns-Bennett High School in 1964 and went on to attend the University of Tennessee, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1968. He later graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 1970 with a Doctor of Jurisprudence (his blood ran orange).

Shortly after graduating from high school, he married his high school sweetheart, Wanda G. McLellan, née Gulley. Their marriage of sixty years was marked by deep devotion and partnership. Wanda enjoyed a long and meaningful career as an educator before her retirement and remained a steady and guiding presence throughout Judge McLellan's life.

Judge McLellan joined the Kingsport Bar Association in 1971 and practiced law in both federal and state courts for twenty-four years as a general practitioner. His commitment to public service led him to serve as Sullivan County Attorney from 1984 through 1994. He also served as City Attorney for the Town of Mt. Carmel and as Judge of the Kingsport City Juvenile Court.

In 1994, Governor Ned Ray McWherter appointed Judge McLellan as Judge of Division I of the 2nd Judicial District Circuit Court of the State of Tennessee. Over the next thirty years, he served the citizens of Tennessee with fairness, wisdom, and unwavering dedication to justice. He was reelected multiple times and remained unopposed in each of his elections.

Judge McLellan was active in numerous legal and professional organizations. He was a member of the American Judicature Society, the American Trial Lawyers Association, and a Fellow of the Tennessee Bar Association. He also served on the Board of Governors of the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association. Among his many professional honors, he served as Director of the Tennessee Trial Judges Association from 1996 to 1997 and became a member of the Tennessee Court of the Judiciary in 1999. In 2004, his fellow judges elected him President of the Tennessee Judicial Conference, a reflection of the deep respect he earned throughout the legal community.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Judge McLellan was deeply devoted to his family and took great joy in spending time with those he loved. He had a particular appreciation for good food and enjoyed cooking for family and friends. He was especially fond of donuts and chocolate milkshakes, simple pleasures that brought him much delight. Judge McLellan also took great pride in his Scottish heritage and valued the traditions and history of his family lineage. John enhanced his Episcopalian beliefs by being with God in his gardens, glorifying nature.

Judge McLellan is survived by his beloved wife, Wanda G. McLellan; his sister, Toni M. Cave and her husband, Hershell; his sons, John R. McLellan and Jason R. McLellan; his grandchildren, Brittany, Kaile, Sydnee, Ava, and Jaxon; and his great-grandchildren, Dante, Ian, and Levi. He is also survived by his special nephew, James R. Smith and his wife, Jana; his dedicated secretary, Jill Cookenour; and many extended family members, friends, and colleagues whose lives were touched by his wisdom, kindness, and service.

Throughout his life, Judge McLellan was known for his integrity, thoughtful judgment, and deep respect for the rule of law. His decades of service to the courts of Tennessee leave a lasting legacy within the legal community and among those who had the privilege of knowing him.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,



S. Curtis Rose