

Memorial Resolution

THE HONORABLE JUDGE ROBERT ERNEST CUPP, JR.

AUGUST 26, 1939 - FEBRUARY 4, 2025

JUNE 11, 2025

Honorable Judge Robert Ernest Cupp, Jr., retired Criminal Court Judge for the First Judicial District of Tennessee, passed away on February 4, 2025, at the age of 85. Judge Cupp was born on August 26, 1939, in Rogersville, Tennessee, to the late Connie Vaughn Gilbert and Robert Ernest Cupp, Sr.

Judge Cupp graduated from Sullivan High School in Kingsport in 1957. He proudly served in the United States Army as a Senior Radar Operator. Following his military service, he worked at Eastman Chemical Company and pursued higher education, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from East Tennessee State University. He later obtained his Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 1971.

Over the course of his distinguished legal career, Judge Cupp served as Assistant District Attorney General, Director of Legal Services of Upper East Tennessee, and again as Assistant District Attorney General for the First Judicial District. In 1998, he was elected as Criminal Court Judge of the First Judicial District, which encompasses Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington counties. He served with distinction for sixteen years until his retirement in 2014.

Judge Cupp was widely respected for his integrity, fairness, and dedication to justice. His commitment to the law extended beyond the courtroom, as he also served as a facilitator for the National Judicial College in Sun Valley, Idaho; Reno, Nevada; and West Yellowstone, Montana. He brought a wealth of knowledge and a spirit of mentorship to judges across the country.

Judge Cupp was an avid supporter of the University of Tennessee and took great joy in traveling the world. He especially enjoyed spending time on his property in Shady Valley, where he found peace riding his tractor. A generous and thoughtful man, he was also an organ donor.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his son Dustin Robert Cupp, and his sister Joan Brown Cox.

Judge Cupp is survived by his loving wife of 35 years, Diane Hollifield Cupp; his sister, Jackie G. Dingus (Victor); sister-in-law, Debbie Greer (Lonnie); brother-in-law, Kyle Hollifield (Camisha); and several nieces and nephews.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we honor the life, work, and legacy of our dearly departed colleague, JUDGE ROBERT ERNEST CUPP, JR., by the Tennessee Judicial Conference, that this Memorial Resolution be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to West Publishing Company for publication in Tennessee Decisions, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this tribute and resolution be furnished to his family.

been models for other Judicial Districts across the State of Tennessee, the Southeast, and the United States.

Written by: Judge Stacy Street