

Memorial Resolution

HONORABLE M. KEITH SISKIN

1971-2017

Judge M. Keith Siskin was born December 10, 1971, in Savannah, Georgia, to Jim and Madeleine Siskin.

Being a Judge was something Judge Siskin had long dreamed of becoming ever since he worked beside a Judge while in high school. That is what inspired him to follow his passion of the law and why he went to law school.

Judge Siskin received his undergraduate degree in English from Vanderbilt University in 1994 and he earned his Juris Doctorate, Cum Laude, from the University of the Georgia School of Law in 1997. He was Editor-in-Chief of the Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law. Judge Siskin was the author of “Does International Law Reflect International Opinion? French Nuclear Testing in the Twentieth Century”, (1996). He was a contributing author for the Great American Lawyers, an ABC/CLIO’s online encyclopedia for American History (2001) and contributing author for the Great American Judges, an Encyclopedia, ABC/CLIO (2003). Judge Siskin began practicing law in 1997 in Rutherford County after he had clerked for the Sixteenth Judicial District Chancery Court. He was also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2002.

Judge Siskin’s first step to judgeship began when he was appointed by Juvenile Court Judge Donna Scott Davenport to serve as a Juvenile Court Magistrate in 2004, presiding over civil and criminal cases involving parentage,

child support, child custody, visitation, dependency, neglect, abuse, and delinquency.

He was appointed by Governor Bill Haslam October 29, 2012, to the Circuit Court Bench for the Sixteenth Judicial District of Tennessee, where he served with distinction. The Court oversees cases from Rutherford and Cannon counties. After his appointment, Judge Siskin won an eight-year term unopposed as a Republican on August 7, 2014, to remain in the Circuit Court Seat.

He was an active member of his community, having served as President of the Rutherford/Cannon County Bar Association, and having been a member of the American Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Association, Tennessee Judicial Conference, Past President of the Murfreesboro Lions Club and Past President of the Murfreesboro Downtown Barristers Lions Club. Judge Siskin was a highly respected member of the legal community.

Judge Siskin was recommended for the National - Sandra Day O'Conner Award for the Advancement of Civics Education in 2016. He was also recommended for the SCALES program.

When Judge Siskin took office in 2012, one of his top priorities was to make the Court system more open and accessible to the public. He began his mission by working with the Rutherford County Office of Information and Technology to create a website for the Court containing the Court's weekly dockets, noteworthy legal news, frequently asked question, forms for pro se litigants, and a self help center, which contained links to various statues, rules of procedure, local rules, and other documents of legal significance. After being given creative control over the website, he continued to enter updates from his Chambers. Judge Siskin then created an official Twitter account for the Court, which he kept updated daily with

docket information and interesting tidbits about the Court system and its history. Judge Siskin also was able to obtain a large flat-screen “Smart TV” which was mounted on the wall outside of his courtroom. The TV was used to display dockets, Court rules, information about the Court, its staff, general information about the Court system, and its history. He would also use that format to explain any historical event of legal significance that occurred on a particular date. Due to his innovated TV other Judges followed suit and information screens can now be found on every floor of the Judicial Building. In 2016, he was nominated for the Justice William Rehnquist award for his innovative use of technology in the Rutherford County courthouse by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Judge Siskin was an extraordinarily gifted individual in both law, especially family law, and in life. He always kept control in the courtroom by maintaining dignity and displaying his calming influence, even in the most difficult cases. He displayed compassion and respect for all who entered his courtroom. Judge Siskin was always a smiling and easy going guy who loved helping people. He was also a happy and well adjusted family man. Judge Siskin was a unique individual with a kind smile, a compassionate heart, impeccable character and sharp intellect. These qualities made Judge Keith Siskin a great person and an excellent Judge who was highly regarded throughout the legal community by the Bar and Judiciary.

His personal and professional relationships he made throughout the community meant the world to him. He had a quick and dry wit which delighted everyone around him. He had a special love for animals and University of Georgia football.

Judge Siskin died July 23, 2017, after a lengthy and painful battle with Crohn's disease an incurable illness that he had dealt with since childhood. We mourn his passing, but celebrate his short, but magnificent life.

Judge Siskin is survived by his wife, Sheri; their daughters, Micah and Shae; his parents, Jim Siskin and Madeleine Varner; his stepmother, Dianne Siskin; his younger brother, Brad Siskin; his maternal grandmother, Sara Deich; and many other relatives, friends, and colleagues.

He loved his wife, daughters, parents and his dogs. He was a person of good taste. He enjoyed a good meal, a good laugh, and sharing both of those with his family and friends.

Judge Siskin was of the Jewish faith and attended World Outreach Church in Murfreesboro.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that the foregoing Memorial Resolution in honor of our departed colleague, M. Keith Siskin, be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to Thomas West for publication in Tennessee Decision, and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copy of this tribute and resolution be furnished to his family.

Respectfully submitted the 13th day of June, 2018.

Donna Scott Davenport
Juvenile Court Judge
Rutherford County Juvenile Court