

Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. Portrait Dedication

Comments by Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr.
Law Day 2012, Hosted by the Bowling Green-Warren County Bar Association
Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center • Bowling Green, Kentucky
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Those of you who know me best know that history and tradition are strong anchors for me. And for that reason, it is a great honor for this portrait to be placed in the Warren Circuit Courtroom, Division No. 2, the trial court where I tried my first case 34 years ago and the trial court where I began my judicial career 20 years ago.

I should first acknowledge Bowling Green's own Angela Kuprion, the portrait artist, whose extraordinarily creative gift for bringing a canvas to life with form and color is evident by her work on display here and by the growing demand for her portraiture all around the country. I have gotten to know Angela, her husband, Bill, and their dog, Gizmo, over the past several months. I must tell you Angela's artistic skill is greatly amplified by her personal warmth, her energy, her enthusiasm and her patience when dealing with her subjects.

I must also acknowledge the indefatigable Cora Jane Spiller. Truly, we would not have this or any portrait dedication in Warren County in the past decade without Cora Jane's generosity with her own funds and her relentless pressure on the judges and the Bar presidents to move these projects along. Cora Jane is truly one of Bowling Green and Warren County's treasures. Several years ago, a group of photojournalists produced a piece called Kentucky Sunshine that contained a spread entitled "Keeping up with Cora." It documented in photographs a day in the life of Cora Jane and her tireless volunteer work in this community.

By volunteering to promote the preservation of Warren County's history, Cora Jane has continued the work begun many years ago by her mother, Jane Morningstar, who spurred Judge Basil Griffin to fund the collection, preservation and appropriate display of the paintings and photographs of judges of the Warren Circuit Court. Because of Mrs. Morningstar and Cora Jane, we have portraits and photos for display of all of the judges of the Warren Circuit Court (save two), beginning with Judge Ninian Edwards who took the bench here in 1802.

So on behalf of the entire bench and bar of Bowling Green and Warren County, and everyone interested in the history of Warren County, I want to thank you, Cora Jane. I also thank:

- The members of the bar. Many of you, along with the Spillers, donated generously the funds to commission this painting.
- Matt Cook, who has shepherded this project for the past several years. I know he thought he'd never see the end of this project.
- Walter Hawkins, Carrie Jolly Link and the members of the Bowling Green-Warren County Bar Association who planned and coordinated today's Law Day events to include this presentation.

- My friends who came today to share this occasion with my family and me.
- My wife, Susan, who does everything in her power to make sure that Page, John and I can pursue our life's dreams.

The acclaimed British author Rudyard Kipling at the turn of the last century expressed a thought in lines of poetry that capture my thoughts for this occasion. Kipling opens with these lines:

“When earth’s last picture is painted/And the tubes are twisted and dried/When the oldest colors have faded/And the youngest critic has died/We shall rest ... ,” the poet says, until we can take up our work anew in eternity free of all distractions and interruptions.¹

The spirit of work Kipling describes is an inner prompting of the human heart that moves us to take up meaningful work to complete the fullness of our being.

I am grateful to the people of this community, many of whom are seated in this auditorium, who have allowed me the privilege of serving in the office of judge. They have made it possible for me in this life to pursue work in accordance with the fullness of my dream.

¹ See www.whitedovebooks.co.uk/poems/inspiration/inspiration_254.html.