A lasting legacy

Robert C. Cannada

Both professionally and personally, Robert C. Cannada
made a lasting mark. His legacy lives on in the law firm he
founded, in the colleagues he mentored, in the friends he
cherished, and in the clients he served.

The spirit of collegiality that marks Butler Snow today was present in the beginning,
thanks in large part to the leadership of Bob Cannada. “The firm was a family with
shared interests, and Bob worked to make it a happy family,” said Gene McRoberts, a
retired attorney who worked with Bob for about 35 years. Phineas Stevens, a retired
founding partner recalled, “Bob and I were friends for 67 years.” He and Bob began their
enduring personal and professional relationship at the University of Mississippi Law
School and continued it after World War II. Their association would have a big impact on
the Mississippi legal scene. In 1946, he and Bob partnered as Stevens & Cannada.
Personal ties also played a role in 1954 when Stevens & Cannada merged with Butler,
Snow & O’Mara.

In 1954, a lot of complex legal business – bonds, mergers, stock offerings – went out of
state. So Bob and his partners set out to build a firm capable of handling those complex
matters. “Bob was a top-flight attorney, well-rounded and well-respected,” recalls
Stevens. Bob was managing partner of the new firm – Butler, Snow, O’Mara, Stevens &
Cannada – for 25 years.

Bob’s leadership abilities won the trust of clients and colleagues. “He was a tremendous
leader, very confident,” said McRoberts. “That confidence rubbed off on you and on
clients.”
“The clients he represented were a Who’s Who of business leaders in Jackson and Mississippi,” said Jay Travis, who joined the firm in 1969 and worked closely with Bob for several years. Besides keen intelligence, legal expertise and absolute integrity, Bob offered clients a rare discernment. “He had excellent judgment in legal matters,” says retired attorney Larry Franck, who joined the firm in 1963.

“He gave both legal and practical advice, and these high-powered businessmen listened,” Travis says. “Bob was often the last one they consulted before a big decision,” adds McRoberts. Clients were not the only ones to benefit from his counsel. “He was a lawyer’s lawyer,” Travis says, noting that attorneys at smaller firms would seek Bob’s advice, which he freely shared. He encouraged Travis and others in the firm to do likewise.

Bob led the firm by consensus, working to achieve harmony by making sure everyone had a voice. “He had a powerful personality and was able to steer the firm toward consensus,” says Franck, who credits him with sound management.

McRoberts sums up the lasting mark of Bob Cannada. “I knew him well and I loved the man,” he says. “He was a great lawyer, a faithful man, and a true friend.” We could all hope to leave such an enduring legacy.

Robert C. Cannada, Sr. died on July 5, 2007, after an illness of 5 months. He was an elder for 50 years at First Presbyterian Church, a founder and former Board chairman for 25 years of Reformed Theological Seminary, a founder and former Managing Partner for 25 years at the law firm of Butler, Snow, O’Mara, Stevens, and Cannada, and an officer in the Navy and veteran of World War II and of the Korean War. He was also a board member of a number of other legal, business, civic and Christian organizations. He was a
faithful and godly leader in the home, in the church, and in the community. He was preceded in death by his lifelong love and wife, Inez Chisolm Cannada, and by one son, Paul Davis Cannada. He is survived by two sons, Robert C. (Ric) Cannada, Jr. (and wife, Rachel) and R. Barry Cannada (and wife, Angelyn), and by five grandchildren, Christy Cannada Burrow (and husband, Beau), Cecilia Cannada Rutledge (and husband, Bryan), Kathryn Cannada Nicholas (and husband Taylor), Caroline Chisolm Cannada, and Robert Davis Cannada, and by 5 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are encouraged to be made to the Founders Fund at Reformed Theological Seminary (5422 Clinton Blvd, Jackson, MS 39211) or to the Twin Lakes Retreat Center at First Presbyterian Church (1390 N. State St., Jackson, MS 39202).

The funeral service will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson on Tuesday, July 10, at 11:00 am, followed by internment at Lakewood Memorial Park on Clinton Blvd. Visitation will be held at First Presbyterian Church on Monday, July 9, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm and on Tuesday, July 10, from 9:00 to 10:30 am.