



## Senior Judge Erwin Ernst

July 27, 2013

Erwin “Ernie” Goree Ernst Musician, Judge & Bon Vivant Erwin “Ernie” Goree Ernst was born on July 27, 1924 in Burlington, Wisconsin to his musician-father, Erwin Ferdinand Ernst and writer-mother, Claire Ashford Ernst and passed away July 24, 2013 in his home in Huntsville surrounded by friends and family. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2013 in the chapel of Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home at 10 a.m. with Pastor Reagan Cooksey officiating. Serving as honorary pallbearers are Les Pool, Don Kramer, Frank Blazek and Herman Myers. Ernie spent his early years in Huntsville, Kerrville, and Kingsville, Texas following his father’s musical collegiate vocation. An avid trombone player and lover of music, Ernie graduated from Kingsville High School in 1942. He entered the U.S. Army Air Force in 1943 and proudly served in WWII during the Pacific Theater of Operations as a crew member of a Transport Aircraft-Medical Air Evacuation. He was awarded the Air Medal for his participation and was honorably discharged in 1946. Ernie attended Texas A&I College, University of Wichita, Sam Houston State University (pre-law), and graduated from Baylor University in 1950 with his law degree. In 1948, Ernie married his muse, Virginia Wallace of Bryan, Texas at the First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas. They recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Ernie practiced law in Post and Lamesa, Texas until 1954 when he moved to Houston, Texas to enter the law firm of Gwin, Meyers, and Wommack. He joined the Harris County District Attorney’s Office in 1955 and participated actively as a Prosecuting Attorney

until 1972 when he resigned as Chief of the Felony Trial Division to move to Huntsville, Texas to become an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. His move was on the heels of the mistrial of Dr. John Hill, whom he prosecuted and the event was chronicled in the book *Blood & Money*. In 1974, Ernie was named General Counsel to the Texas Department of Corrections where he remained until 1976 when he was appointed to the newly-created post of District Attorney of Walker County, Texas. In 1978, Governor Dolph Briscoe appointed Ernie as Judge of the 12th District until his retirement in 1988. In 1988, he was certified as Senior District Judge which allowed him to try cases throughout the State of Texas upon assignment. Ernie continued to serve as a legal legend as an active Senior Judge, still wearing his trademark string ties. He is survived by his wife, Virginia Wallace Ernst; brother, Tony Ernst; son, daughter-in-law and grandson, Mark, MaryAnne and Zachary Ernst; daughter and son-in-law, Regina and Fred Guthrie; and daughter-in-law Rhonda Ernst of Bedias, along with his dog Ray. His family wish to thank Les Pool for his never-ending friendship, Dianne Smith for her kind and tender caregiving, and the employees of Traditions Home Health & Hospice. Those wishing to leave memorial condolences for the family may do so at [www.shmfh.com](http://www.shmfh.com) and, in lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Heart Association. Following the memorial service, please join the Ernst family for a birthday toast honoring Ernie's 89th birthday. Location: The Rusty Rooster (formerly Borski's) located at Shepard Hill/Old Danville Rd., Willis, TX, phone 936-344-8212.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Senior Judge Erwin Ernst*

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November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ *You have our deepest sympathy for the loss of Judge Ernst. He was a good judge and a courteous and decent man who will be missed. We are sorry for your loss*

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**Mike and Nita Hoelscher** - July 29, 2013 at 04:44 PM



“ *Regina,*

*Judy and I extend our sincere condolences to you and your family on the death of your father. We can only imagine how difficult it is to lose a brother and a father in such a short span of time. You and your family are in our prayers.*

*Vic & Judy Sower*

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**Victor & Judith Sower** - July 27, 2013 at 12:36 PM



“ *On several occasions, I had the privilege to testify as a medical expert before Judge Ernst. He was wise and gentle; his guidance and wisdom were appreciated and valuable. His friendship with Les Pool demonstrated his true nature and goodness. Judge Ernst was a true Texas gentleman and will be missed. God bless.*

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**Darrel Wells MD** - July 27, 2013 at 12:11 AM

SS

“ Mrs. Ernst and Regina, I am so sorry for your loss. As I was telling Regina the other day, I could never drive through Forest Hills and not think of your sweet family and all of the good times we shared when we were teenagers. I will never forget the summer vacation you took me on either or the first time I was called into jury duty and Judge Ernst said, " Susie what are you doing here? Aren't you enrolled in college?" I answered, "Yes sir, but I have always wanted to be chosen as a juror." I was not chosen, but it was an honor to sit in his court. Cherish your memories. My prayers are with you all.  
Susie O'Bannon Sharp

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Susie Sharp - July 26, 2013 at 09:53 PM

JS

“ my prayers are with you love Danita  
Prayers with your family. Diane  
may God give you and your family strenght doing your time of  
sorrow love Bertha  
He will be missed by all who know him,if youal need anything let us  
konw. Love and prayers Joe  
He will always have a speacial memory in our hearts. He will always  
be wathing over us. may God be watching over you and your family.  
We will be here for you also for love and support. Love Lizz  
THINKING OF YOU Lisa,Neva,Grace,Whitny

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jcpenney salon - July 26, 2013 at 06:42 PM

KB

“ Dear Regina and family,

*Please accept my deepest sympathy on the loss of Huntsville's greatest judge-Erwin "Ernie" Ernst-whose legacy will go down in history--as most certainly a one-of-a-kind person and a friend to all. He had the greatest sense of humor and could bring a big smile to anyone. Regina, do you remember when we both worked at the Criminal Justice Center at SHSU? I still remember mentioning to you how funny your dad was the day I had to attend some sort of court procedure (maybe perhaps jury selection)--anyway we were laughing and that's when you told me how your father described the day you "came to be" long after your older brother was born--you know--your Mom and Dad were in Dodge, Texas, under a big tree with a cheap bottle of wine and a nice comfortable quilt!!! The rest is history!!! How blessed you and your family are to have had one remarkable man--husband, father, grandfather, father-in-law, and uncle who was loved and respected by the entire Huntsville community (other than the criminal element!!). Although he is a huge loss to all of us and will be so very missed--he is, no doubt, our loss but heaven's gain. God Bless all of you and be assured that although I will be unable to attend The Honorable Judge Ernst's memorial services, you will all remain in my prayers. Kay Billingsley*

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**Kay Billingsley** - July 26, 2013 at 03:06 PM

DS

“ *Mark, Gina, Virginia and family:*

*My deepest sympathy to each of you. 'Uncle' Erwin was a true intellectual, a man who lived his principles, and a most interesting and loving soul on the earth. He was a legend in his own time and a real magnet. I will always remember him with deep appreciation for his mental prowess, his philosophical musings, and his endless reservoir of humor ... he always put a smile on my face. Many great memories sitting around with a jug of cheap wine debating life and the intricacies of the English language. Thank you for the memories.*

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**Donna Saunders** - July 26, 2013 at 12:37 PM

JB

“ *My favorite district judge and favorite district attorney, great humorist, entertaining and all 'round great guy, the world is less interesting, not as fun and poorer with his passing*

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**Joe Warner Bell** - July 26, 2013 at 11:30 AM

KB

“ *Judge Ernst was one of my favorite people in the entire world and one of the best judges I ever had the pleasure of trying cases before. May his memory be for a blessing.*

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**Kaye Applewhite Brouse** - July 26, 2013 at 10:25 AM

PW

“ *Goodbye my funny friend.*

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**Philip Warner** - July 26, 2013 at 09:52 AM

VM

“ *My great aunt, Patricia Ernst, was married to Mr. Ernst's father and was his stepmother. She spoke so highly of him. He must have been a wonderful and charming man.*

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**Vicki Gamblin McNew** - July 26, 2013 at 09:09 AM

FM

“ *We are so sorry for your loss. We had a lot of fun watching Mark and Wally play basketball and to enjoy you, Gina, and Erwin at the games. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. We love you. Foster and Lucille*

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**Foster & Lucille Martin** - July 26, 2013 at 08:46 AM

TG

“ *Mrs. Ernst, Mark & Regina - it saddens me to think that Iron Ernie is no longer in this world to brighten the days of everyone he knew. He truly was "one of a kind." I am only glad that I had the opportunity to know him and the rest of your wonderful family. Some of my best memories will always be at Dodge. Know that your whole family is in my thoughts and prayers. Terry Evans Gilmour.*

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**Terry Evans Gilmour** - July 26, 2013 at 08:35 AM

JP

“ *Dear Ragina--So sorry to hear about your dad. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you.*

*Jimmie & Jay*

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**Jimmie Prejean** - July 25, 2013 at 09:54 PM

MH

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to the family. Judge Ernst is going to be missed by the ones his life touched. He always had time to help others in our community. I know I will miss him. It was wonderful to talk with him and just enjoy his stories. He loved his family and would say others needed to in order to make our world a better place. His faith was important to his decision making. You and I will have good memories that no one can take away.

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**M. Hyvl** - July 25, 2013 at 08:36 PM

GM

“ Ms Ernst - I never had the opportunity to meet you but seems like I knew you well. I am retired District Clerk of Leon County - where Judge Ernst and I got in "trouble" during a trial....I will always have wonderful memories of him and always remember that "Mother" would only give him \$4 a day for lunch - not really sure that is true but that was his pitiful story to get lunch bought for him many times. I am so sorry for your loss and he will be missed by so many.

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**Gloria McCarty** - July 25, 2013 at 05:53 PM

PC

“ Regina and Mrs. Virginia.

*I (Paula) was so sorry to hear about your beloved Ernie. He was such a wonderful man and always had a kind and witty word. I fondly remember him from our days at BAYLOR football games. He was an inspiration to many!*

*Just know that we love you, and we are remembering you in prayer and honoring the memory of Ernie. May your heart and soul find peace, rest and strength.*

*"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will NEVER die." ~ John 11:25,26 ~ HALLELUJAH!!*

*Our deepest heartfelt sympathies,  
Paula Adams & Dennis Clark*

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**Paula Adams & Dennis Clark** - July 25, 2013 at 05:27 PM

CD

“ Regina, I don't know if you remember me, but we worked together briefly at SHSU when you were a grad student, and I was with the Small Business Development Center. I am so sorry for your loss. I pray that God gives you and your family the comfort that only He can give.

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**Connie Durdin** - July 25, 2013 at 01:29 PM

BT

“ REGINA AND MRS. ERNST YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN OUR PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS. JUDGE ERNEST GAVE ME MY FIRST SWEARING IN AS DISTRICT CLERK OF WALKER COUNTY IN 1981. HE WAS ALL OUR PRIDE AND JOY TO WORK WITH. CHIEF WAS A FOND ADMIRER OF JUDGE ALSO YOU COULD NOT ASK FOR ANYONE THAT WOULD BE ADMIRER MORE THAN JUDGE ERNST. HE WAS SO FUNNY IN ALL HIS STORIES HE HAD TO TELL US MAYBE TRUE MAYBE JUST LOVING TO SEE AND HEAR THE LAUGHTER IT WAS FUN TO BE WITH HIM WORKING FOR HIM AND WITH HIM. MAY GOD BLESS ALL THE ERNST FAMILY HERE IS A BIG HUG FOR ALL OF YOU FOR US LOVE YOU

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**BETTY TACKETT** - July 25, 2013 at 12:48 PM

BT

“ Z14Pi

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**BETTY TACKETT** - July 25, 2013 at 12:35 PM

BS

“ Regina, so sorry to hear the news about your Dad. He was "one of a kind" and I am thankful for all the wisdom filled conversations I was able to have with him in the front yard. Y'all will be in our prayers.

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**Bill Shipman** - July 25, 2013 at 11:50 AM

JR

“ Regina, I am so sorry for the loss of your Dad. Sending prayers to you, your Mom, Fred, and all your family.

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**Jana Richie** - July 25, 2013 at 10:17 AM

CP

“ Regina, Fred and Family, I was so sorry to hear of your daddy passing yesterday. We will keep you, your mom and family in our prayers. I know you are going through a really tough time now with all you have gone through lately and if there is anything I can do, please don't hesitate to ask. All of us here at Destin are here for you and your family and will keep you in our thoughts and prayers. Love you guys, Cyndi

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**Cyndi Wyman- Destin Drywall & Paint** - July 25, 2013 at 10:00 AM

DE

“ So sorry for your loss, but Judge Ernst served our entire community passionately and was one of the most charismatic people I ever met. I know you will miss him but he's gone home and can look down on us and smile that his work was done.

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**Dana Eckles** - July 25, 2013 at 09:57 AM

MN

“ Mrs. Ernst & Regina,

We are so, so sorry to hear of Judge Ernst's passing. We will truly miss him! We will be out of town and unable to attend the service but please know that our thoughts are with you during this difficult time. We pray that wonderful memories are a comfort to you and your family.

Much love,  
Mike & Tammie Nokes  
& the staff at McGilberry Mechanical

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**Mike & Tammie Nokes** - July 25, 2013 at 09:56 AM

CG

“ So sorry for your loss, Mrs.Ernst. I will be praying for you and your family during this time.

*Gina, I am the lady who takes care of your mom when you bring her to the lab at the hospital. You both are such special people to me.*

*Carolyn*

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**Carolyn Gibson** - July 25, 2013 at 09:53 AM

BN

“ Regina, So sorry to read about your Dad passing away. Give your Mom a big hug for me. I will remember your family in my prayers.

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**Beverly Niederhofer** - July 24, 2013 at 05:06 PM