**JUDGE CHARLES EDWARD BURKS**

*Judge Burks and his wife purchased the Powell House, 307 Washington Street, in 1922. They resided on Diamond Hill until 1927.)*

**PREFACE (Extract)**

“What most impressed me about [Judge Burks] was that he didn’t play favorites. If you were standing before Judge Burks, the color of your skin, your position in the community, your religion, or your bank account meant nothing. You were tried under the law as the Judge understood it, and that was that.”

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Judge Charles E. Burks was born in Mississippi on May 8, 1886. He moved to Virginia in 1906 and attended Washington and Lee University at Lexington as an undergraduate and law student, graduating in 1912. From June 1912 until January 1913, he served with the F.B.I. and then practiced law in Lynchburg with F.S. Kirkpatrick and D. H. Howard in the firm of Kirkpatrick and Howard. Later this firm became known as Kirkpatrick, Howard, Burks, and Kirkpatrick, the fourth partner being T. S. Kirkpatrick. The firm continued as Kirkpatrick and Burks after the deaths of the senior members.

In World War I, he enlisted in the infantry and served in France and elsewhere advancing to the rank of sergeant when discharged in 1919.

Politically active, he managed the Trinkle-for-Governor campaign in 1921 and was manager of Claude A. Swanson's campaign for the United States Senate in 1922. Judge Burks was elected to the Virginia Senate where he served until he became the circuit judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Virginia in 1940. This circuit embraced Lynchburg and Campbell County at the time.

Bedford County was added to the Circuit in 1948. At that time, there was only one circuit judge serving the district. but following state-wide judicial reorganization in 1973, the old Sixth Circuit was made a part of the larger Twenty-Fourth Circuit now served by four judges. Bad health in 1964 caused Judge Burks to perform his duties on a part time basis. He announced his intention to retire on March 1, 1965, after 25 years on the bench, but he died in January of that year at the age of 78. Governor Albertis S. Harrison, Jr. appointed William W. Sweeney to succeed Judge Burks.

At the time of his death, Judge Burks was divorced. He lived in' Lynchburg with his son-in-law and daughter, Mrs. Margaret B. Fishkin. Mrs. Burks is deceased. Mrs. Fishkin still lives in Lynchburg.

In announcing his retirement to the Governor, Judge Burks wrote, "I have done my dead level best but this judgeship is no part-time job nor even a half-time job. It is a full time job and it is considerably less than satisfying when I find I am physically unable to give my full time to the work involved."

At his retirement, several attorneys remarked that his record of service was unique in that as a State senator he was present at every session and voted on every question. As a judge, he claimed to have never been late for court and never missing a day because of illness until his heart attack on March 17, 1964. During his time on the bench, he had 77 cases appealed but he was reversed by the State Supreme Court in only 10 cases a remarkably good record.

When asked by a reporter what he would do after retirement, he remarked, "Oh, I'll continue to study the law. That has been my life and it's my only hobby."

- *Sweeney, William W., WE REMEMBER CHARLIE – Recollections of the late Judge Charles E. Burks of Lynchburg, Virginia, undated, no publisher listed.*