

ARKANSAS COURT OF APPEALS

EN BANC

Opinion Delivered January 25, 2012

IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE
GEORGE KNOX CRACRAFT, JR.

PER CURIAM

On August 28, 2011, the State of Arkansas lost one of its greatest jurists with the passing of the Honorable George Knox Cracraft, Jr., of Helena. The Arkansas Court of Appeals wishes to acknowledge Judge Cracraft's singular service to the State of Arkansas and to express its sympathy to his wife, Kathleen, their four daughters, and the rest of his family.

Judge Cracraft's life was one of tradition, service, and integrity. Born September 29, 1922, he became a third-generation Arkansas lawyer. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of the South and his law degree from Harvard Law School, as did his father, George Knox Cracraft, Sr. Also like his father, Judge Cracraft practiced law in Helena, Arkansas, and developed recognized expertise in insurance and property law, particularly in the area of riparian rights.

He served his country with distinction in battle, as did his grandfather, Captain George Cracraft. During World War II, Judge Cracraft served as First Lieutenant in the United States



Army Air Forces, piloting B-17 Flying Fortress bombers on thirty-five combat missions over Nazi Germany. He returned to the Army in 1950 and served in Korea as Captain in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. For his service in Europe and Korea, Judge Cracraft was awarded, among a number of other decorations, the Distinguished Flying Cross, with one oak leaf cluster; the Air Medal, with six oak leaf clusters; and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Serving in peace as well as in war, Judge Cracraft was West Helena City Attorney and Phillips County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. His judicial career began with his 1968 election as Chancery and Probate Judge for Phillips County and neighboring counties, a position that he held for twelve years. He was elected to the Arkansas Court of Appeals in 1980, served two terms as Chief Judge (1984–86 and 1991–92), and retired at the end of 1992. His opinions were models of judicial scholarship and clarity.

Judge Cracraft's intellect and accomplishments were extraordinary, and so was his humanity. All who knew him will remember his kindness, generosity, and patience, and his devotion to his beloved family. He is sorely missed.