

Williams Mullen Mourns the Loss of Attorney Donald H. Clark

10.29.2012

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Donald H. Clark.

First and foremost, Don was a beloved husband, father and grandfather. The loss of Don is a difficult one for his wife, Faye, his children, Don and Julie, his entire family, our firm, our city, our region and our clients. He was an incredible partner, mentor and friend.

The Firm is better for Don having been an important part of it. He began his legal career as a litigator in 1968 and shortly thereafter, in 1972, founded and led the Virginia Beach-based law firm that became Clark & Stant and merged with Williams Mullen in 1999. At the time of the merger, Clark & Stant was the largest firm in Virginia Beach and one of the largest in Hampton Roads. Early in his legal career, Don quickly became a highly regarded and respected litigator, with a work ethic second to none. In a well-publicized Norfolk Circuit Court jury trial, Don represented Hampton Roads Transit and beat the famous Melvin Belli.

Don was client focused, and always led by example demanding 110% of himself and our lawyers and staff. At the same time he was compassionate, a great mentor, a close friend and an advisor. Those who worked with him learned the meaning and benefit of outstanding preparation and teamwork. He always had your back.

As a trial attorney, he also did much for the City of Virginia Beach and its beaches, earning him the nickname "The Protector of the Sand." Don was well known for his representation of the City of Virginia Beach in a landmark case that confirmed and protected the City's ownership of its beaches and the ability to pump sand to prevent erosion.

Don was also an excellent leader who was called on many times by his city, charitable, health care and community organizations and the bar to lead. He was well-trained for leadership, as a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and a Naval officer who served our country with distinction. At one time, he stood eye-to-eye with soviet warships. While in the Navy, he earned his juris doctor from the George Washington University School of Law in the evenings.

Don was a well-known and highly-respected pillar of the legal and business community of Hampton Roads. Due to the respect local business leaders had for him, Don was named King Neptune the 28th and presided over the Virginia Beach Neptune Festival in 2001, which was a particularly difficult post as it followed on the heels of 9/11/01. Don's dignified leadership and presence set a perfect tone for the event during a very trying time.

As other examples of some of Don's many awards and distinctions, Don was in the Inns of Courts and a member of the American College of Trial Attorneys for many years, led the Mayor's Redistricting Committee in Virginia Beach, and was recently selected as a Virginia Leaders in the Law recipient. He was honored by Virginia Lawyers Weekly at a ceremony on October 25, 2012.

Don loved outdoor activities and adventure, particularly skiing in Aspen, and was happiest there with his family. One of the last goals he set for himself was to ski with all five of his grandchildren at Aspen, which he was able to do earlier this year.

A memorial service will be held for Don this Friday at 11 AM in the Eastern Shore Chapel on Laskin Road in Virginia Beach. Please keep Don's family in your thoughts and prayers. He will be missed.

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