

JUDSON SAGE (PETE) WOODRUFF was a multi-faceted, highly intelligent, nationally recognized authority on oil and gas law. His lifetime pursuits took him from a depression era farm in Alabama to the University of Oklahoma, to the United States Navy in World War II, to service with the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency in the Far East, to European general manager of a major oil company with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland responsible for operations in Europe, Libya and the Middle East to private law practice with McAfee & Taft in Oklahoma City.

Although an Alabama boy, Pete became a true Sooner. Pete graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in physics in 1948 and a law degree in 1950 while serving on the Board of Editors of the *Oklahoma Law Review* and with Order of the Coif honors. He was a Sterling fellow at the Yale Law School in 1950-1951. He joined McAfee & Taft in 1964 and practiced here until his retirement in 1990. He was a principal lawyer at McAfee & Taft in the oil and gas practice group as well as the leader of the litigation practice group.

Pete's gracious manner, thoughtful guidance, keen intellect and problem solving ability served his clients, partners and associates well. Pete's skills included recruiting and training new lawyers to be part of the emerging litigation practice at McAfee & Taft. He was instrumental in preparing young attorneys to make persuasive oral arguments and to write clear and convincing briefs which were submitted to state and federal courts across Oklahoma and the Southwest region. Pete was never too busy to lend an ear and his experience to answer any questions concerning an upcoming deposition, oral argument, brief or trial. His insightful guidance was unfailingly helpful in solving the legal problem at hand.

Pete would also take on the most complicated oil and gas title issues to be found in the office. He would tackle those factual and legal issues with the same proficiency he demonstrated in solving the most difficult crossword puzzles he could find. His title opinions always demonstrated a firm grasp of complex fact patterns and an unequaled knowledge of the Oklahoma law and title standards. After a full day at the office, Pete went home for dinner and then routinely worked for several more hours in his home office. His philosophy was simple: if something was worth doing, it was worth doing well.

In addition to his law practice, he taught law courses in Oil and Gas and Equity, served as a bar examiner for the Oklahoma Bar Association, Oklahoma editor of the *Oil & Gas Reporter* and the Southwest Legal Foundation. He was also a fellow of both the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and the American Bar Foundation. Pete also served the State of Oklahoma by chairing the Governor's Committee on Ad Valorem Taxation, as a member of the Alcohol Beverage Commission and as Highway Commissioner for the district that included Oklahoma City. His civic dedication made the State of Oklahoma a better place to live.

Pete was also a part of the fabric of life in Oklahoma City. He served on several civic boards, including Citizens Concerned for Children and Westminster School, where his wife, Millie, taught. He also served as deacon of Westminster Presbyterian Church and tutored children in the SPARK program. He drew cartoons for many years and devoted much of his time in retirement to watercolor painting. He was a devoted husband to his wife, Millie, a dedicated father to his daughter, Jenny and a mentor, role model and friend to his two step-sons, Mike Coats and Sandy Coats.

Pete kept an extensive collection of owl figurines in his office that always drew a great deal of comment from clients and lawyers alike. All those who knew him thought that collecting a group of owls was a perfect hobby for a person as wise as Pete.

By Robert Gilliland
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