

## **Memorial Resolution**

### **Honorable James E. “Eddie” Beckner**

James E. “Eddie” Beckner was born in Appalachia, Virginia, as the son of Olan E. Beckner and Iantha Hopkins Beckner. After he and his family moved to Morristown, he attended Morristown High School. Upon his graduation from Morristown High School in 1957, Beckner attended and graduated from Carson Newman College. During his undergraduate studies, a professor suggested that Beckner pursue a career in law. He later graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 1965.

As an attorney in Morristown, Beckner began a most successful practice of law. He eventually became active in politics and was appointed by Governor Ray Blanton in 1976 as criminal court judge of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. He subsequently was re-elected in 1982, 1990, and 1998. In 1984, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, and Hancock counties were joined to form the presently existing Third Judicial District, where Judge Beckner served the remainder of his tenure. Following a distinguished career, Judge Beckner retired in 2006.

During his tenure as a member of the Tennessee Judicial Conference, Judge Beckner served with excellence in many respects, including as President during 1998-1999. He also served as President of the Tennessee Judicial Conference Foundation, chair of the Retired Judges Committee, member of the Executive Committee and member of the Judicial Family Institute.

A champion of professional mentoring, Judge Beckner worked diligently with others to develop, enhance, and implement the Tennessee Judicial Mentoring Program. He served as East Tennessee Regional Coordinator for several years until his passing on September 16, 2020. Moreover, over the span of many years, Judge Beckner personally mentored numerous Tennessee judges, clerks, attorneys, and legal professionals.

Judge Beckner demonstrated an ardent devotion to community service, civic pursuits, and charitable endeavors. Judge Beckner was a faithful church and choir member at Cherokee Hills Baptist Church in Morristown. He served as a deacon, taught Sunday school, and worked closely with youth ministries.

Judge Beckner’s passion for supporting the needs of children and youth was keenly demonstrated through his service to the Boys and Girls Club of Morristown. Serving on the board of directors for 41 years, his leadership and influence profoundly inspired countless members of his community to likewise support the work of the Boys and Girls Club. During the course of four decades, his service included Chairman of the Tennessee Area Council, Chair of the Boys and Girls Club Foundation and member of the National

Council of Boys and Girls Clubs of America. He initiated and developed dozens of new programs for club members, including choir, theatre, computer, sports, and social programs. Judge Beckner was once quoted as saying, "There is no greater good nor is there anything more noble than helping children realize their full potential as healthy, happy, well-balanced, productive citizens." Richly deserving of awards of recognition, Judge Beckner received club honors of Program Volunteer of the Year, President's Award, Golden Youth Award, Service to Youth Award, Tennessee Board Member of the Year, Club Hall of Fame and Southeast Regional Board Member of the Year.

An avid outdoor enthusiast, Judge Beckner spent numerous summers teaching more than 300 young club members the techniques and skills of water skiing. He also led annual hikes to Mt. Le Conte in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for club board members, judges, lawyers, and many community professionals.

Judge Beckner's professional and civic accomplishments were surpassed only by his faithful devotion as husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Carolyn Davis Beckner, daughters, Tina Hale and Terri L. Beckner, and grandson John E. (Mariah) Hale.

Judge Beckner leaves a powerful and enduring legacy of excellence, integrity, humility, and service to others. He was a highly respected jurist, deeply committed to fair and impartial administration of justice. Judge Beckner faithfully served his family, the practice of law and countless others who enjoyed the distinct privilege of knowing him.

Adored by family, befriended by colleagues, and respected by all those who knew him, Judge James E. "Eddie" Beckner established an enduring legacy by leaving his profession, his community, and our great State remarkably better places.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that the foregoing Memorial Resolution in honor of our departed colleague, James E. "Eddie" Beckner, be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to West Publishing Company for publication in Tennessee Decisions, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this tribute and resolution be furnished to his family.

Respectfully submitted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2021.

Thomas R. Frierson, II, Judge  
Tennessee Court of Appeals