

Fall 9-1-1980

Edward S. Graves - View from the Bar

Cecil W. Taylor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cecil W. Taylor, *Edward S. Graves - View from the Bar*, 37 Wash. & Lee L. Rev. 1039 (1980),
<https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr/vol37/iss4/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Washington and Lee Law Review at Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Washington and Lee Law Review by an authorized editor of Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact lawref@wlu.edu.

EDWARD S. GRAVES - VIEW FROM THE BAR

CECIL W. TAYLOR*

To say Ed Graves is a doer is a masterpiece of understatement. His energy and enthusiasm are unbelievable. He is the only man I have ever known who, after a full day at the office, will put in an appearance at two separate parties during the "happy hour," carefully timing himself at each, go to dinner at another host's home, leaving in time for choir practice at church, thence home to grade examination papers. He skillfully apportions his time among the law, his church, his civic activities, sitting on more boards of directors than one can enumerate, and his many friends; saving out enough time each day to religiously do his yoga exercises and keep in practice on the piano. It is no wonder he has never married; he has never had time.

Edward Spencer Graves was born December 30, 1909, in Lynchburg, Virginia. After finishing the Lynchburg Public Schools and Episcopal High School, at Alexandria, Virginia, he entered Washington and Lee, receiving his A.B. degree in 1930 and his M.A. in 1931. While working on his masters degree in English, he taught some English classes in the academic school. It is probably that experience which helped him develop one of the many talents which have made him the successful lawyer and law teacher that he became. He has an uncanny ability to use the English language to describe with precise clarity and accuracy any legal relationship in connection with which he is called upon to draft a document.

After Washington and Lee, he entered Harvard Law School from which he obtained a J.D. degree in 1935. Shortly thereafter, went to Puerto Rico where he worked for the Department of Interior, of which Harold L. Ickes, one of the original "new dealers", was Secretary (in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabinet). It could have been there that Edward became the ardent Democrat he is or it could be that his great concern for his fellow man simply made it unrealistic to him that in this land of opportunity and plenty that anyone, regardless of economic status, should suffer for lack of the best of medical care, job opportunity, security, or anything else which the government can provide that makes man's life enjoyable.

I first met the man when I was a high school student. He consented to chaperone a mixed group of us on an overnight hike to the peak of a remote mountain in central Virginia. All through the cold night, it was amazing to watch Edward keep the boys and girls who were in his charge in their proper places and perspective. There was no way anybody could escape the watchful eye of our chaperone. I knew then that this was a

* Partner, Martin, Taylor, Fralin, Freeman & Perrow, Lynchburg, Virginia; A.B. 1939, LL.B. 1941, Washington & Lee University.

man of great perception and ability to handle any situation.

Some years later, I began my law practice in his law firm. I have since stated, on many occasions, that I learned more law working for Ed Graves than I did in three years at law school. That, of course, is an exaggeration, but the precise training he gave to all of the younger members of his firm in the art of drafting legal documents and doing the other rudimentary things a lawyer does, has greatly contributed to the legal careers of all of us.

In his law practice, Edward demonstrates the same enthusiasm and energetic pursuit that he does in his social and academic life. Whenever he is confronted with a legal problem, no matter how complex and interesting, or how simple and boring, his immediate attitude is "let's get started," and thereafter he will stick with the job until it is through. His superior intellect, thoroughness, and attention to detail characterize his performance as an attorney at law. He is completely forthright in his dealing with the court and opposing counsel. You can rest assured when he comes to the bar that he has done his research well, is thoroughly prepared, has his evidence well organized, and has all of the applicable principles of law readily at his fingertips. He is a learned and tough advocate but completely fair.

Actually, all who know Edward know that he is a tough advocate in everything he does, whether it be trying a law suit, playing handball, racing up and down the beach at Nags Head, or simply vying in a bridge game. He is possessed of that kind of intellectual ability and motivation to learn that makes him good at whatever he undertakes. He is always good company, an invigorating conversationalist, and a loyal friend.

Washington and Lee law students who have been fortunate enough to have studied under this learned man and generally good guy will not only be better lawyers, but better people.