



A JUDICIAL LEADER PASSES

James Duke Cameron
1925-2003

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ith James Duke Cameron's passing, Arizona has lost one of the most fervent advocates for the improvement of the Arizona judicial system in the state's history.

In his long judicial tenure, Duke served on all three levels of Arizona's judiciary: the trial court in Yuma County; the Court of Appeals, Division One; and the Arizona Supreme Court. Wherever he served, it was with great distinction. He was passionate about making all levels of Arizona courts more efficient by clarifying and updating the rules of procedure. Under his watch as Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, Duke saw to it that Arizona revised its rules of civil procedure, its appellate rules and the rules of evidence. Arizona's courts were among the first to adopt the most recent recommendations of the American Law Institute of the Appellate Judges Conference.

Over the years, Duke served on many committees of the American Bar Association. He served as Chairman of the Judicial Administration division of the ABA, as well as the Conference of Chief Justices. With his distinguished service on these committees, Duke acquired great wisdom regarding successes in judicial reform in state courts throughout the United States and other countries. He brought that progressive thinking to Arizona and saw to it that the best of these innovations were implemented here. Duke saw to it that the Staff Attorney's office of the Arizona Supreme Court was reorganized and expanded so that it became more effective in helping a very busy court.

Duke almost single-handedly developed a curriculum and saw to it that the first school able to grant an advanced degree to sitting appellate judges was created and funded at the University of Virginia. He was also a stalwart supporter of the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada, and he encouraged Arizona judges to attend. Wherever he could, Duke encouraged the upgrading of judges' education and efficiency in Arizona.

Besides being an excellent administrator, Duke Cameron was outstanding in his other capabilities as an associate justice. He was a patient and a good listener in oral arguments, and his written opinions were clear, concise, coherent and complete. He was a good student of the law, and he was honorable in his decisions.

Duke was a good friend of mine from the time we met as first-year students at the University of Arizona College of Law in 1951. He was Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court when I was appointed to that Court in 1975, and he was very helpful and patient in assisting me to make my transition from being a trial judge in Mohave County to being an Associate Justice on the state's highest court. I will miss him greatly.

Duke Cameron left Arizona a legacy of judicial improvement that has been built upon since he was Chief Justice. This legacy has been the envy of many state courts in the United States. Arizona's citizens and especially its judges are greatly in his debt. It has been an honor on my part to have served with him. ▀

*Hon. Frank X. Gordon, Jr.
was on the Arizona Supreme
Court from 1975 through
1992, serving as its Chief
Justice from 1987 through
1992. He is now with Roush,
McCracken, Guerrero, Miller
& Ortega PC in Phoenix.*

BY HON. FRANK X. GORDON, JR.



The Arizona Supreme Court in 1977.
Center: Chief Justice James Duke Cameron; clockwise from left: Fred C. Struckmeyer Jr., Vice Chief Justice; William A. Holohan; Frank X. Gordon, Jr.; Jack D.H. Hayes