

January 3, 2001

PRESS RELEASE

Judge William Miller Drennen, former Chief Judge of the United States Tax Court, died on December 22, 2000, in Martinsburg, W.Va.

Judge Drennen was appointed to the Tax Court by President Eisenhower, taking the oath of office on October 1, 1958. He was elected Chief Judge for three consecutive 2-year terms, serving from 1967 to 1972. During his tenure as Chief Judge, the Court became a legislative court under Article I of the Constitution, and the Court's jurisdiction was significantly expanded. Additionally, as Chief Judge, he successfully pursued the construction of a new courthouse for the Tax Court. Judge Drennen assumed senior status on June 2, 1980, and retired on December 31, 1993.

Judge Drennen was born in Jenkins, Kentucky, on March 1, 1914. Judge Drennen earned a bachelor's degree in 1936 and a law degree in 1938 from Ohio State University. During law school, he was employed in the office of the Ohio State Tax Commissioner. After graduation, he clerked for the Hon. George W. McClintic, U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia, before joining the law firm of Brown, Jackson & Knight (now Jackson & Kelly) in Charleston, W.Va. From 1942 to 1945, Judge Drennen was a Naval air combat intelligence officer in the Pacific, becoming a lieutenant commander.

After the war, he returned to Charleston, where he became a partner at Jackson & Kelly and served as a member of the city council, the board of trustees of Charleston Memorial Hospital, the board of directors of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, the board of directors of the Buckskin Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the American Judicature Society, the A.B.A. section of taxation, and the Englewood Country Club. He was president of the West Virginia Tax Institute.

While living in Washington, Judge Drennen had been a member of the Metropolitan Club and the Chevy Chase Country Club.

Judge Drennen is survived by his wife of 60 years, the former Margaret Morton, and four children: Margaret Penelope McLanahan, of Athens, Ga.; William M. Drennen, Jr., of Charleston, W.Va.; David Holmes Drennen, of Denver; and Dale Louise Walter of Shepherdstown. He is also survived by a sister, 11 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

Commemorative services will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, January 8, at Trinity Episcopal Church in Shepherdstown.