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In Memoriam

In Memoriam Judge Myron H. Bright

Diana E. Murphy[†]

At the passing of Judge Myron Bright last December, the legal community lost a popular and excellent jurist. Judge Bright was hard working and fiercely independent. By 1994, when I was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Judge Bright had already served on the court for twenty-six years! Certainly respectful of his colleagues, he was nevertheless far from reluctant to express his contrary opinions in any case, sometimes very forcefully. I had the privilege and joy to work with him for twenty-two years.

Two examples of Judge Bright's compassionate convictions stand out in my memory; both took place in the final year of his life. In that 2015–16 court term, Judge Bright sent me a note commending my own approach in a case in which he had not been a member of the panel. That thoughtful note illustrates Judge Bright's active engagement in all of the work of our court throughout his tenure. Another example was Judge Bright's well reasoned dissent in an opinion reviewing one of my own.¹ As Judge Gerald Heaney described him, Judge Bright had a “unique ability to stand fast on his convictions and yet maintain good personal and professional relationships with other judges and lawyers with whom he disagrees.”²

Judge Bright worked hard to ensure that every litigant received equal justice under the law; he always wanted each party before him to feel heard. His practice was to examine each aspect of an appellate case, always filled with energy, and his goal to guarantee that the justice system worked for all.

[†] Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

1. *United States v. Fogg*, 836 F.3d 951, 954–63 (8th Cir. 2016) (Bright, J., dissenting).

2. Gerald W. Heaney, *A Tribute to Judge Myron H. Bright*, 83 MINN. L. REV. 223, 223 (1998).

Judge Bright had a bevy of dedicated law clerks over the years. During his time on the bench more than 100 law clerks passed through his chambers. He cherished his time with them and always looked forward to his law clerk reunions every five years.

It was both fun and an honor to serve with Myron Bright and to call him my friend. He will be sorely missed by all his colleagues and the circuit bar.