



The 2001 Joseph Branch Professionalism Award Recipient J. Ruffin Bailey

James Ruffin Bailey, is a graduate of UNC Law School and an Air Force pilot veteran of World War II. Admitted to the bar in 1948, Ruffin joined his father, I.M. "Ike" Bailey, and Clem Holding in practice. The firm did extensive work before the Utilities Commission in addition to legislative, corporate and trial practice. After his father's death, Ruffin practiced by himself for a year or two before being joined by Wright Dixon. The pair then formed the firm of Bailey and Dixon.

In addition to his general practice, Ruffin became one of the leading attorneys practicing in the utilities transportation area. At that time, the trucking industry was regulated by the Utilities Commission and had the power to grant or deny trucking routes within North Carolina. Ruffin was also an accomplished administrative lawyer. He represented administrative boards and individual licensees. He was acknowledged to be a "a very knowledgeable and tough fighter."

Elected Senator to the North Carolina General Assembly in 1964, he served for six years with distinction. Rising to a leadership role in the Senate, Ruffin was Chairman of the Legislative Study Commission on Compulsory Insurance, the North Carolina Courts Commission, and the Governor's Council on Juvenile Delinquency. The North Carolina Courts Commission reorganized the courts in North Carolina and Ruffin received the American Judicature Society's Herbert Lincoln Harley Award in recognition of this accomplishment.

After retiring from the General Assembly, Ruffin represented a long list of clients, both individuals and industries, in legislative matters. Ruffin's friendliness, integrity and credibility made him an admired and effective advocate in the General Assembly and elsewhere.

Ruffin greatly admired his father "Ike" who had been the Chairman of the Utilities Commission and the first President of the North Carolina State Bar. Ruffin personified the individual qualities he saw in his father. Just like Ike, if Ruffin gives you his word, you can put it in the bank.

Outside the practice of law, Ruffin is also a leader. A lifelong member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Ruffin served on the Vestry several times as well as being Junior Warden and Senior Warden. For ten years he was the scoutmaster for the Church's Boy Scout troop. Also a member of the Raleigh Rotary Club, Ruffin served as its president in the past. He has also been on the board of directors of the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry.

Ruffin married Nelle Rouseau of North Wilkesboro in January 1945. They had two children and three grandchildren. Although a lifelong Carolina man, he is purchasing N.C. State basketball tickets this year owing to his granddaughter Liz working out with the Women's team! Despite this set back, he is well deserving of this organization's Professionalism Award.