

## **Justice Jack Crozier Watson**

Jack Crozier Watson was the only Louisiana Supreme Court Justice elected from Calcasieu Parish. Justice Jack Watson passed away at 93 on February 11, 2022 and leaves a great legacy and proud family.

Jack was born in Jonesville, Louisiana. He was the son of a State Highway engineer who moved his family many times. Jack attended six grammar schools and two high schools. His connection with Calcasieu Parish began when his Father was assigned to build the “existing” I-10 bridge over the Calcasieu River. Jack went to college at 16 and attended Louisiana Lafayette (then SLI), where he was a leader on the Debate Team. He served our Country in the Korean War as a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. Jack was stationed in the Philippine Islands after graduating from the Georgetown Intelligence School. Following his military service, Jack attended law school on the GI Bill.

Jack distinguished himself at LSU Law School by winning the prestigious Moot Court trial competition; he started his legal career at King, Anderson and Swift in Lake Charles. District Attorney Frank Salter appointed Jack Assistant District Attorney. Together they prosecuted the first large drug trial in Lake Charles. Also, Jack was on the Host Committee for the visit in 1959 by then Senator John F. Kennedy.

Jack was elected Calcasieu Parish District Judge at 35, one of the youngest ever to be elected judge in Louisiana. Judge Watson proudly performed as many as 86 marriages in one year and started the first Family Court in Calcasieu Parish. One prominent local attorney stated that “Judge Watson handled all family matters on a Wednesday night.” Judge Watson was also instrumental in getting our Juvenile Detention Center built.

In 1972, Judge Watson was elected from 21 Parishes to the prestigious Third Circuit Court of Appeals. He returned to the Philippines in 1977, after being invited as one of the few United States delegates to the International Conference of Appellate Magistrates. Jack was elected without opposition to the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1979. He then became Justice Jack Watson and proudly served our State with honor and skill on Louisiana’s Highest Court for 17 years. He served with remarkable colleagues and prided himself on not being late with his Judicial Opinions.

Jack had a passion for travel and photography. He photographed polar bears in Canada and wild animals in Africa. Jack was a Commander of the Lake Charles Yacht Club and, with his family as his crew, won the Flying Scot sailing division. Jack coached his sons’ athletic teams, and one of his favorite activities was teaching Tulane Law Summer School in Greece.

One cannot mention Jack without mentioning his wife, Sue. They met in Law School and were married 63 years. Jack told the story that banker Frank Field lent him

\$500 to get married on what Mr. Field called a “character loan.” Sue and Jack were constant companions, worked together and were best friends. Jack is survived by his wife, Sue, and his son, Wells, the managing partner of Baggett McCall Law Firm. Wells credits his parents for his legal career and as a lawyer cherished his Father’s invaluable guidance. Jack was a very proud grandfather of three – Wells, Jr., Emeline and Jack, II. He was his grandchildren’s personal photographer and will always be known to them as “Big Jack.” Jack is also survived by his brother, Dr. Jerry Watson, a retired orthopedic surgeon. Jack’s parents were Jesse Watson and Gladys Talbot Watson. Jack was predeceased by his son, Carter, and his brother, Talbot. Jack will be buried in his judicial robe alongside his family in Jonesboro, Louisiana.

One of Jack’s favorite expressions was “sometimes you have to stand up and be counted.” Justice Jack Crozier Watson stood up and was counted for his 93 amazing years. The Watson family gives heartfelt thanks for the amazing acknowledgements of our beloved Husband, Father, and Grandfather. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Episcopal Day School or to Tulane University Law School.