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Feb. 2011 E-newsletter Alumni Spotlight: George Carley (LL.B.'62)

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Alumni Spotlight: George Carley (LL.B.'62)

News @ Georgia Law Feb. 2011 Alumni Profile

Name: George H. Carley

Title: Presiding Justice

Employer Name: Supreme Court of Georgia

Location: Atlanta, Ga.

Number of years as Georgia Supreme Court Justice: Almost 18

Georgia Law graduation year: 1962

Other degrees/institution/year: A.B./UGA/1960



1. Why did you choose to attend the University of Georgia School of Law?

- I was engaged in undergraduate studies at UGA and was accepted at the Georgia School of Law beginning in the Fall Quarter of 1959. There was no LSAT requirement at that time!

2. Who was your favorite Georgia Law professor? Why?

- Dr. Verner F. Chaffin - He was and is the most brilliant property law professor in the state and maybe the nation. I never intended to be a "dirt lawyer," but I wanted to engage in property litigation. Therefore I took all of the courses he taught and, luckily, I had quite a few such cases during my practice.

3. What is your most memorable experience from your time at Georgia Law?

- The day the majority of my class learned that we had passed the Bar Exam, beating Emory's passage rate for the first time in many years. At that time, you could take the Bar Exam after two years in law school.

4. Where was your favorite place to study during law school?

- There was a little room off what is now the Lovejoy Courtroom which had a Code and the Georgia Reports and Georgia Appeals Reports, and in which one could smoke! Several of us studied there regularly.

5. What was your favorite thing about living in Athens?

- Everything. After all, it is "Heaven."

6. What advice would you give to current Georgia Law students?

- Of course, students should dutifully study their course materials as instructed by their professors. However, if they intend to practice in Georgia, they should begin keeping up with Georgia Law now so that the transition will be easier.

7. Please give a brief description of your responsibilities as a Georgia Supreme Court Justice.

- I read constantly, research extensively and write persuasively so that I can convince at least three of my colleagues to make the opinion I am circulating the law of Georgia.

8. What do you enjoy most about your job? What is the most rewarding aspect?

- I enjoy preparing for and attending oral argument when Appellate Counsel are qualified and prepared, which is most of the time. The most rewarding aspect of the job is working with my colleagues to construe and apply the law in any case, big or small, because every case is big to the litigants involved.

9. What made you decide to be a judge and eventually accept an appointment to the Georgia Supreme Court?

- I always wanted to practice law as a trial lawyer and then become an Appellate Judge. I was lucky enough to be appointed to the Court of Appeals and then to this court. I personally knew the late Governor George D. Busby as well as many of his supporters. Governor (and later Senator) Zell Miller appointed me to this court based only upon recommendations by many, many supporters, and I am eternally grateful to them and to Governor Miller.

10. What is one of the greatest challenges facing your field right now?

- Budgetary concerns.

11. What do you do to handle the stress of your work? How do you relax after a stressful day?

- I have found the best way to handle the stress of my work is to work harder. I relax after a stressful day by reading fiction because I read what is supposed to be non-fiction all day!

12. What advice would you give to someone wanting to work in your field?

- Practice law for about 20 years trying as many cases as possible and become a "damn" good friend of the Governor and the Governor's supporters.

13. What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What are your hobbies?

- I enjoy traveling with my wife in August, the only time that the court is out of term. My only real hobby is reading fiction.

14. If you could share an afternoon with anyone, with whom would you choose to spend it?

- My wife

15. What would you consider your greatest accomplishment in life?

- Convincing Sandy to marry me.

16. How do you stay up to date on legal issues and trends?

- The old fashioned way: Reading the advance sheets and keeping up with the legislation.

17. What book/resource do you find yourself referencing the most?

- OCGA and the Georgia Digest.

18. When you look out your office window, what do you see?

- Nothing! Because I do not have time to look out the window.