

IN MEMORIAM

MYRON E. LEAVITT

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

IN THE MATTER OF A MEMORIAL TO
THE HONORABLE MYRON E. LEAVITT.

ORDER

As an expression of the esteem and respect held by the Bench and Bar of the State of Nevada for the late Honorable Myron E. Leavitt, who passed away in Las Vegas on January 9, 2004,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the following memorial be printed in the next published volume of the Nevada Reports.

Dated this 27th day of December, 2007.

BY THE COURT

A. WILLIAM MAUPIN, *Chief Justice*

MARK GIBBONS
Associate Justice

JAMES W. HARDESTY
Associate Justice

RON D. PARRAGUIRRE
Associate Justice

MICHAEL L. DOUGLAS
Associate Justice

MICHAEL A. CHERRY
Associate Justice

NANCY M. SAIITA
Associate Justice

MEMORIAL

Myron E. Leavitt was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 27, 1930, the youngest son of Myron “Mike” and Estella Leavitt. He had a humble upbringing. His mother worked as a maid, and his father worked for the county street department. Both of his parents served the community. His mother served as the national vice-president of the Women’s Auxiliary of the American Legion, and his father served on the Clark County Commission. Justice Leavitt would continue their commitment to community service throughout his life.

Justice Leavitt received his early education in the public schools of Las Vegas. He attended Las Vegas High School, where he distinguished himself in academics, athletics, and theater. He served as editor of the school paper and performed as the lead actor in the senior class play. He was also named outstanding athlete in his class, receiving three letters each in football and track and two letters in basketball. He was named to the all-state team in both football and track, as well as all-state in American Legion Baseball.

During his senior year, he was the state champion in both the 100- and 220-yard dashes.

Justice Leavitt graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1948 and attended the University of Nevada-Reno on an athletic scholarship. While at the University of Nevada-Reno, he built upon his athletic achievements and continued his interest in journalism. He earned letters in football and track and was named sports editor of the university newspaper. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism.

After graduating from the University of Nevada-Reno, he worked for one year as the sports editor of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. Then, with the encouragement of his brother Elwin, Justice Leavitt decided to enter law school. He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City in 1956, graduating eighth in his class.

It was during his time in Salt Lake City that Justice Leavitt met his wife Shirley. The couple was married on June 10, 1954. After Justice Leavitt graduated from law school, the couple returned to Nevada and, in the ensuing years, raised 11 children. He often sang his favorite song, "Home Means Nevada," to get the children up in the morning. All of the children would attend their father's alma mater, Las Vegas High School, five of them would follow in his footsteps and become attorneys, and one of them would follow him as a district court judge in Department 12 of the Eighth Judicial District Court.

Justice Leavitt started his legal career in Las Vegas. He served as North Las Vegas deputy city attorney from 1956 to 1957 and spent 28 years in private practice. As a private attorney, he successfully argued the case that forced the Nevada Legislature to reapportion itself according to population. He spent almost a decade of his time in private practice in a partnership with William Boyd and Jim Brennan.

Justice Leavitt would dedicate more than five decades as a public servant, holding six elective offices. He began his elective service in the judiciary as a Las Vegas Township Justice of the Peace from 1961 to 1962. As a justice of the peace, he established the county's first medical-coroner system by appointing a medical doctor as chief deputy coroner. He also created the first night court for small claims cases. Almost a decade later, Justice Leavitt served as a Clark County Commissioner from 1971 to 1974. As a county commissioner, he was instrumental in the construction of a senior citizen center, four new courtrooms, and a county morgue. Justice Leavitt then served a term on the Las Vegas City Commission (now the Las Vegas City Council) from 1975 to 1978. As a city commissioner, he worked to establish a sheriff's substation in southeastern Las Vegas. And in 1979 Justice Leavitt became Lieu-

tenant Governor of the State of Nevada, serving in that position through 1982. In addition to his elective service, Justice Leavitt served on a dozen or more community boards over the course of his life as a public servant, including the Clark County Health District, the Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital (today University Medical Center) Board of Trustees, McCarran International Airport Committee, Clark County Gaming and Liquor Licensing Board, Clark County Solid Waste Management Board, and the Metropolitan Police Commission.

In 1984, Justice Leavitt returned to the judiciary. Governor Richard Bryan appointed him to the district court bench in Clark County. At the time, Governor Bryan commented: "He is an able lawyer and will be a distinguished judge." Justice Leavitt would serve fourteen years in Department 12 of the Eighth Judicial District Court. During his tenure on the trial court bench, he served two terms as the Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court and served as president of the Nevada District Judges Association. He consistently received some of the highest ratings in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* judicial survey. In 1998, Justice Leavitt was elected to the Nevada Supreme Court as the court expanded to seven justices. He was reelected to a six-year term in 2000.

Throughout his life, Justice Leavitt contributed his energies to the community in which he lived. One of his greatest contributions was to the youth of southern Nevada. He dedicated much of his free time to coaching Little League Baseball, American Legion Baseball, Pop Warner Football, Basketball, and Bobby Sox Softball. He was one of the original founders and coaches of Little League Baseball in southern Nevada. His all-star team of 1970 was the runner-up of the Western Region. He was active in Southern Nevada Junior Football, serving as a legal advisor and coach for 10 years. He was named the manager of the Bobby Sox Softball all-star team in 1985.

His coaching for over 35 years touched the lives of many young people. Governor Kenny Guinn, who coached against Justice Leavitt in Pop Warner Football, remembered that Justice Leavitt "always cared about the young people he coached. If the kids couldn't get to the game, he would pick them up and bring them and would make sure they got home." When children on his teams could not afford athletic equipment, he would make sure that they had what they needed to participate. He made sure that no child fell through the cracks. Justice Leavitt's dedication to and love for the Las Vegas community was recognized in March 2002, when the Myron Leavitt Middle School was named and dedicated in his honor.

Justice Leavitt passed away in Las Vegas on January 9, 2004, at the age of 73. More than 1,500 people, including every justice of

the Nevada Supreme Court and judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court, gathered for a service to celebrate his life. He was remembered as a dedicated husband, father, friend, and public servant, a devoted youth sports coach, and an extraordinary jurist. Justice A. William Maupin summed up Justice Leavitt's impact as a legal professional and family man:

On behalf of his colleagues in the justice system, I can safely say Justice Myron E. Leavitt was admired, respected and revered and will remain so in the hearts of everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. . . . If his wife and his family were his first love, Nevada was his passion. His love and his passion were given with his whole heart. . . . He lived a remarkable life, leaving a legacy of his essential goodness. . . . Myron E. Leavitt honored Las Vegas and Nevada with his commitment to public service; it's only fitting that we as Nevadans honor him, his family and his life.

In sum, Myron E. Leavitt will remain in our hearts as a true son of Nevada.