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## Russell C. Dunbar

James M. Sprouse

*United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit*

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## **RUSSELL C. DUNBAR**

*The West Virginia Law Review mourns the loss of Russell C. Dunbar from the College of Law community. We were greatly saddened by the passing of our teacher and friend. This issue is dedicated to his memory.*

## RUSSELL C. DUNBAR

JAMES M. SPROUSE\*

We, of course, can never be completely reconciled to the death of a friend, particularly one who lived with Russell Dunbar's enormous good humor and enthusiasm, and who enriched so many lives. Our solace is to acknowledge the breadth of Russell's accomplishments and to recognize that he died much too young.

Russell was a friend, a colleague, and an ally, and I was fortunate to know him throughout the many phases of his life—as a fighter pilot in World War II, a fellow student at Columbia Law School, prosecuting attorney and circuit judge in Cabell County, an amateur farmer who at one time raised horses, and finally as a professor of law.

His tenure at the College of Law was short, and I witnessed only one of his classes. It was enlightening and stimulating. He was widely admired among the students, and known for his commitment to the development of excellence in advocacy. His own skills as a public speaker could easily have earned him his way as a toastmaster; the stories he shared while serving as master of ceremonies at various College of Law functions already have become part of the informal curriculum.

To the students and faculty colleagues who knew him for only a short time, his career as a legal educator must have seemed tragically brief. Russell, however, devoted his entire professional life as a lawyer, prosecuting attorney and trial judge, in great part, to legal education. He was a natural educator, with particular empathy for the young. Whether at the home of friends or at a political or professional gathering, it was the young who quickly gathered around him for fun and instruction.

Russell also counseled and helped develop the art and skill of his colleagues, whether they were fellow practitioners, young lawyers entering the profession, legislators or judges. His aid to the Bar, the Judicial Association and the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals was invaluable.

Although he never sought national recognition, Russell would have been an outstanding Governor, United States Senator or United States Supreme Court Justice—his talents were that full and diverse. But he always was too busy helping others develop their career potential to concentrate on that kind of advancement. Russell instinctively and consciously directed his primary interest toward helping others, and at this he was magnificently successful.

His life-long devotion to legal education touched many who were not fortunate enough to study formally with him in the classroom, and the State Bar is indebted in good part to his presence for its excellence. His impact on formal

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\* Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit; B.S., St. Bonaventure University, 1947; LL.B. Columbia Law School, 1949; International Law Studies, Fulbright Scholarship, University of Bordeaux, France, 1950.

legal education at the University cannot be measured by time. The quality of his contribution will transcend many future years. His legacy of accomplishment in our state, whose ranks of leadership have never been particularly thick, made him one of the great modern West Virginians. Both the state and the College of Law were fortunate to have had him.