

SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

IN MEMORY OF
JUSTICE RAY THORNTON

Opinion Delivered April 14, 2016

PER CURIAM

On April 13, 2016, Honorable Ray Thornton, who served with distinction on this court from 1997 to 2004, died at the age of 87. Following his retirement from this court, Justice Thornton was named as the first public service fellow for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law. In 2009, he was selected as the first chair of the Arkansas Lottery Commission.

We remember Justice Thornton for his lifetime of public service to the people of Arkansas. As a member of this court, he advanced the cause of justice with compassion, integrity, and fairness. The court extends its deepest condolences to his wife, Betty, and his entire family.

As we stated upon Justice Thornton's retirement, "[h]is sound judgment, tenacity, and gentlemanly humility will be missed by all." *In re Retirement of Justice Ray Thornton*, 360 Ark. App'x 645, 645–46 (2004).

IN THE MATTER of THE RETIREMENT OF
JUSTICE Ray THORNTON

Supreme Court of Arkansas
Opinion delivered December 16, 2004

PER CURIAM. Justice Ray Thornton has devoted his life to working for the betterment of the people of this state and nation. His distinguished career of public service has earned him respect for his achievements in many arenas. On the occasion of his retirement from the bench, the Arkansas Supreme Court pays tribute to Justice Thornton as jurist and friend.

A graduate of Sheridan High School, Yale University, and the University of Arkansas School of Law, Ray Thornton served as Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Pulaski and Perry Counties and spent fourteen years in the private practice of law. In 1969-70, he chaired the State Board of Law Examiners. As Arkansas Attorney General from 1971 to 1973, he established the Consumer Protection Division and sponsored the Criminal Code Revision Commission.

Elected to Congress for the Fourth Congressional District, Justice Thornton made his mark from 1973 to 1979 as a member of the Judiciary and Agriculture Committees and as Chairman of the Science, Research, and Technology Committee. Between 1980 and 1989, he ably guided Arkansas State University and then the University of Arkansas as president of those institutions. Justice Thornton returned to Congress from 1991 to 1997 as a representative of the Second Congressional District and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

It has been in his capacity as Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court, from 1997 to the present, that Ray Thornton has gained the admiration and affection of his colleagues. His sound judg-

ment, tenacity, and gentlemanly humility will be missed by all who have had the pleasure to work beside him for the common goal of advancing the cause of justice. The Court offers Justice Thornton its congratulations for his accomplishments and extends best wishes to him and his family for the future, bidding him, in the words of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, to “Call your companions, / Launch your vessel / And crowd your canvas, / And, ere it vanishes / Over the margin, / After it, follow it, / Follow the Gleam.”