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Aaron Ashley Flowers Seawell

William A. Devin

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This issue is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Justice Aaron Ashley Flowers Seawell who served his state and nation with wisdom, character, and devotion.

AARON ASHLEY FLOWERS SEAWELL

HON. WILLIAM A. DEVIN*

In the death of Justice Aaron Ashley Flowers Seawell, which occurred October 14, 1950, the judiciary and the bar of North Carolina lost an eminent member. His achievements in those fields of endeavor made a lasting impression on both.

The son of a Confederate soldier, Justice Seawell was born when the stars and bars still waved over North Carolina. To him was given "by reason of strength" more than four score years, but all of those, since he emerged from adolescence, have been filled with worthwhile tasks courageously undertaken and illumined by an understanding mind and sympathetic heart. After a wide experience at the bar, and as a member of the General Assembly of North Carolina for six sessions, he was appointed and elected Attorney General of the State in 1935, and in 1938 he became Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, and so continued until his death. In all his public and private employment whether as practicing lawyer, or member of North Carolina's highest court, he brought to the strict performance of duty a genial friendliness that won the affections of his associates.

He was endowed by the Creator with unusual gifts. His mental faculties were so varied, so comprehensive in scope, so quickly alerted, so thorough in pursuit, so determined in achievement that his profound knowledge in matters not only of law but also of science, letters, esthetics, philosophy was such as to compel the conviction that if he had not been an outstanding lawyer, wise legislator and eminent judge, he might have been a great scientist, philosopher, poet, musician. A poem that he had written was set to music and sung at his funeral.

His philosophy of life was characterized by firm faith in God. His practice of Christianity caused his selection as Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church of which he was a loyal member throughout his life.

* Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of North Carolina.

He served for more than twelve years as a Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. The opinions which he wrote for the Court appear in Volumes 213 to 232, inclusive, of the official reports of the Court. These twenty volumes of the Court's reports have been enriched by the ornate language in which he expressed the Court's decisions. These opinions reflect his legal learning, ripe scholarship, and a philosophy of constructive thinking, and clearly evince a keen search for the ideal of human justice. His command of language, the facility with which he expressed the most delicate shades of thought and meaning have served to give both elegance and precision to the language of the Court. Of him it might well be said, as was said of North Carolina's first Chief Justice, "He made the law amiable in the sight of the people."

He is survived by his wife with whom a long and happy life was blessed by four sons and two daughters. Three of his sons follow in the footsteps of the father in the law. One son gave his life in the service of his country at Guadalcanal.

To those with whom he served and who knew him in the full flower of his intellectual life there remains the unforgettable impression of unusual talents, the gift of appropriate expression, and a benign and courageous spirit.

His memory will abide.