

STOLZ, Jr., Judge Irwin



Judge Irwin W. Stolz, Jr., 94, died peacefully at his home in Charlotte on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024, surrounded by his much-loved wife, Mary Bell, and other family members.

Judge Stolz (fondly known as Yutch to his close friends) was born on November 9, 1929, in Atlanta, GA. He spent his early childhood splitting time between home and his family's farm in Montezuma. He spoke often and fondly about his days on the farm. While still a youngster, his family moved to Columbia, SC, where he graduated from high school. He then went on to study at Washington and Lee University. Judge Stolz left school to join the military, where he was a proud member of the 82nd Airborne Division. After his service, he returned to Georgia, where he went to school on the GI Bill; attending the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, and finally Emory University School of Law, graduating in 1958.

After law school Judge Stolz moved to Northwest Georgia and practiced law in Lafayette with his best friend, former Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Norman Fletcher. During his time in Lafayette, he represented hundreds of businesses and individuals, as well as becoming the County attorney. He was also elected statewide in 1969 as the President of the State Bar of Georgia. Prior to his death, he was the oldest living former

State Bar President, something he was quite proud of.

It was also in North Georgia, that Judge Stolz met a young state senator from South Georgia, Jimmy Carter, who was running for governor. They developed quite the bond, and Stolz traveled the state relentlessly to help his friend become governor.

Several years later, Governor Carter appointed Judge Stolz to the Appeals Court. Judge Stolz had remarked many times since, that Jimmy Carter is the "finest man I've ever met." Later, when Governor Carter became President Carter, he sent Judge Stolz on several international trips as his personal emissary, into conflicted areas attempting to quiet these disputes.

Judge Stolz later left the bench and re-entered the practice of law. At first handling traditional corporate cases and clients, he eventually found what became his true calling, representing the underrepresented, in their attempts to achieve justice, primarily at the plaintiffs' bar. He loved practicing law, and always held it up as one of his greatest honors.

Judge Stolz eventually joined his other best friend, Former US Senator David Gambrell in the firm, Gambrell and Stolz, where they practiced together for decades. In 2002, Judge Stolz "retired" to Athens, Georgia, where he also started the firm of Hurt and Stolz.

Judge Stolz was also an athlete. During his 40's and 50's he ran marathons and competed in dozens of races all over the country. When he turned 60, he returned to the swimming pool, where he had competed in his earlier years. His competitive nature emerged, again, and he began swimming in Masters Swimming Meets. He again, competed all over the world and attained All-American status many times, and broke two World Records, that are still in the books today. He also loved traveling to swim meets with his little brother Hal, who was a US Olympic qualifying swimmer in his own right.

In 1977 Judge Stolz married the former Mary Bell Hancock Harrison of Savannah, GA, and blended their two families.

They were married for 47 years.

While he loved the Law as his profession, he loved the University of Georgia Bulldogs, and he loved swimming; he loved his family even more. And while they enjoyed all the loud and boisterous family holidays together, Judge Stolz and Mary Bell also traveled the world. They spent weeks traveling in Europe and Australia and New Zealand. However, it was their time together, just sitting in their den watching old movies, and holding hands, that he cherished so much. Judge Stolz and Mary Bell moved to Charlotte in 2016.

Judge Stolz is survived by his wife, Mary Bell; three children, Irwin "Will" Stolz, III, and his wife, Karen, Dr. Mary Bell Vaughn, and Robert H. Stolz, Sr., and his wife, Anne, and his stepson, Wiley A. Wasden, III, and his wife, Anna. Also surviving are his seven loving grandchildren, Alec Stolz, Tripp Vaughn, Mary Gray Stolz, Robert Stolz, Jr., Anderson Wasden, Chris Wasden, and Hunt Wasden; and one great-grandchild, Wiley Wasden, V. He was preceded in death by his brother, Dr Hal Fisher Stolz, Sr.; and grandson, Sam Stolz.

A memorial service will be held 3:00 PM on Friday, April 5, 2024, in the chapel at Southminster Retirement Community, 8919 Park Road, Charlotte, NC. The family will receive friends following the service at Southminster. A private family committal service will be held in the Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, GA, at a later date.

Those wishing to honor Judge Stolz, may make a donation to the University of Georgia Foundation, 1 Press Place, Suite, 101, Athens, GA 30601 or online at <https://give.uga.edu/> to support the UGA Swimming and Diving Support Fund.

Arrangements are in the care of Kenneth W. Poe Funeral & Cremation Service, 1321 Berkeley Ave., Charlotte, NC 28204, (704) 641-7606. Online condolences may be shared at www.kennethpoeservices.com.