Summary

Size: approx. 100 linear feet

Geographic Locations: Primarily New Orleans, La.

Inclusive Dates:

Summary: Personal and legal records of John A. Dixon, Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Louisiana. Includes personal and legal records, and three indices for 1) Dissents/Consents, 2) Opinions: Civil cases, and 3) Opinions: Criminal cases.

Related Collections: Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Archives (Mss 106)

Source: Gift, 1990

Access: No restrictions
Biographical Note

John Allen Dixon, Jr. was born in Orange, Texas in 1920 and moved to Louisiana with his family, living in Haynesville, Grand Cane, and Shreveport. He graduated from Fair Park High School and received his B.A. from Centenary College in 1940. From the fall of 1940 until early 1942 he taught high school in Tallulah. In 1942 he enlisted in the army and served in the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. For 21 months he was a prisoner of war in Germany and was discharged as a Staff Sergeant in October 1945.

Dixon received his law degree from Tulane University Law School in 1947. He engaged in the private practice of law and served as Assistant District Attorney in Shreveport. In 1957 he was elected District Judge, serving until his election to the Second Circuit Court of Appeal in 1968. He was elected to the Supreme Court without opposition and took his seat as Associate Justice in 1971. He became Chief Justice in 1980 and served until his retirement from the Supreme Court in 1990.

Among many honors he received, John Dixon became an Eagle Scout and a Silver Beaver. In 1981 he was named the Outstanding Alumnus of the Tulane School of Law and in 1992 was inducted into the Centenary Alumni Hall of Fame. The American Civil Liberties Union recognized him in 1991 with the Benjamin E. Smith award for a lifetime of defending civil rights and civil liberties. He championed the cause of the little man, and some people called him "liberal" because of this. He preferred, however, to call himself a strict constructionist. He was an active member of the North Highlands Methodist Church before moving to New Orleans, and a member of the Queensborough Masonic Lodge for many years. Additionally he was active in the Shreveport Bar Association, the Louisiana State Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the Conference of Chief Justices. Dixon served as president of the Centenary College Alumni Association and was a founding member of the board of directors of the Woolworth Foundation, which supported retired Methodist ministers and their families.

Some of Dixon’s interests included photography, running, handball, golf, and sailing. He also enjoyed camping, fishing and woodworking.

In 1945 Dixon met and married Imogene Kathleen Shipley. They became the parents of three daughters, Stella Dixon Shepard of Glenwood, Arkansas; Diana Dixon Gingles of Shreveport; and Jeannette Dixon of Houston. At the time of his death in 2003, Dixon was the grandfather of Luke Shepard, Iris Shepard Fogelman, John Morehead, Lester Morehead III, and Sam Morehead; and the great-grandfather of John William Shipley Fogelman and Madeline Imogene Morehead.
One of Dixon’s successors, Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr., described him as “a great judge, and an even greater man. He was a man of few words but boundless strength and courage, he was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He was dedicated to securing justice while applying the law reasonably and fairly. A life-long public servant, he served well the people of his district and his state.”

Source: “Memorial Service for John Allen Dixon, Jr. ’40, Retired Chief Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court to be Held Saturday, March 1 in Brown Chapel, Centenary College.” Centenary College of Louisiana News (February 26, 2003); Pacal F. Calogero, Jr., “Message from the Chief,” in Louisiana Supreme Court, Annual Report 2003 of the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court (New Orleans: The Court, 2004), 3 (quotation).

Container List

The collection has not been processed.

Index Terms

Dixon, John A., Jr.
Judges—Louisiana—New Orleans
Louisiana. Supreme Court