

Carrington Coleman Founder Jim Coleman of Dallas Leaves Lasting Impact on Legal Ethics, Professionalism

*Legendary Texas trial lawyer inspired countless attorneys
through dedication, hard work*

DALLAS – For generations of lawyers, **James E. “Jim” Coleman Jr. of Dallas** defined what it means to practice law with professionalism and integrity. In a career spanning more than six decades, he was a role model and mentor to countless attorneys, a trusted advisor to his clients, a gifted and successful trial lawyer, and a tireless advocate who upheld the legal profession’s highest standards.

Jim Coleman passed away on Saturday, February 22, in Dallas. He was 96.

Mr. Coleman’s diligence on behalf of his clients and his reverence for the law profession leave a lasting influence not only on Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal, L.L.P, the firm he founded in 1970, but also on those who knew him personally and professionally. For Mr. Coleman, being a lawyer was a calling, rather than about “winning and getting the biggest fees.” That dedication to justice motivated him to continue a regular work schedule well into his 90s at the firm he founded.

“I love being a lawyer because the law is the most beautiful thing you can do. It is about helping people,” he told Texas Lawbook in a 2013 profile published on the eve of his 90th birthday.

Mr. Coleman enlisted in the U.S. Army following the attack on

Pearl Harbor, rising to the rank of Second Lieutenant. As a platoon leader in Gen. George Patton's Third Army, he earned the Silver Star for gallantry in action in the historic march through Europe. Buoyed by the G.I. Bill, Mr. Coleman completed his undergraduate degree at Georgia Tech in 1948. He graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1951 shortly before receiving orders to report for deployment to Korea. Unknown to him at the time, the orders were actually from the Central Intelligence Agency, where he remained until 1953.

When he left the agency, he turned down the opportunity to join Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan, the Atlanta-based law firm that his father-in-law, William Sutherland, helped to found. He instead opted to move his young family to Texas, joining Carrington, Gowan, Johnson & Walker, opening its successor firm, Carrington Coleman on January 1, 1970.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Coleman represented such notable clients as Ford Motor Co., GM, Uniroyal, John Deere, Enron's Ken Lay, and numerous Texas-based insurance companies and banks.

Famously ambivalent about professional accolades, Mr. Coleman preferred to let his dedication and the quality of his work stand on their own. A veteran of hundreds of jury trials and immensely successful on behalf of his clients, Mr. Coleman is perhaps best known for the impact he had as a legal mentor, a promoter of gender and racial equality in the profession, and a champion of high ethics and professionalism.

"This profession is better for the simple fact that Jim Coleman had a passion for the law," says Bruce Collins, the firm's managing partner. "We will not see another like him, in terms of his approach to the law and the way he worked with people, in our lifetimes. He was the right person to lead the way for positive change and his example and values will always be this firm's guiding principles."