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## Chief Justice Calvert, Our Highly Regarded Of Counsel In Memoriam.

Lloyd Lochridge

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**CHIEF JUSTICE CALVERT,  
OUR HIGHLY REGARDED  
"OF COUNSEL"**

**LLOYD LOCHRIDGE\***

When Robert W. Calvert resigned as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas in 1972 and walked a few blocks across the state capitol grounds to our law offices, we began an enjoyable association with him spanning more than twenty years. We already knew something of his background, including his practice as a small-town lawyer in Hill County, his participation in the Texas political scene, and his years on the supreme court. At that time, however, none of us could have fully known or imagined the qualities of this man who ultimately became our friend and counselor.

From the beginning, we heard about Judge Calvert's life in the state home in Corsicana. We also learned about his experiences as a small-town practitioner in Hillsboro that, because of the Depression, proved financially unrewarding. He intrigued us with stories of his service in the Texas House of Representatives and in Democratic politics during the 1940s. When Judge Calvert spoke of his tenure on the Texas Supreme Court, it was apparent that he had liked most of his colleagues. Over time, we learned how he regarded each of them. He generally reflected a high degree of respect; however, in those rare instances when he did not display enthusiasm or affection for a particular individual, he always exercised restraint in his comments.

When referring to his accomplishments or the positions in which he had served, Judge Calvert never demonstrated any self-adulation or egotism. Still, he created the impression that, as the high court's chief justice, he mandated an efficient and hard-working

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court. He was punctual, as former Governor and United States Senator Price Daniel learned: Governor Daniel arrived late to his first session of the court to find that Judge Calvert had started—without him and on time.

Judge Calvert's strong work ethic quickly became evident. He continued as an early riser all the years we knew him. If the *Dallas Morning News* was not delivered by 6:00 a.m., by which time he had been awake for a while and had expected to read it, he would call the newspaper's office. He liked to be busy and was quite willing to take work home when required by the many deadlines of our law practice.

Those in our firm who were privileged to work with Judge Calvert learned of his keen analytical ability, his knowledge of legal precedents, his clarity of thought and expression, his dedication to simplicity and brevity, and his decisiveness. Although he was quick to find the issue and reach an answer, Judge Calvert was always willing to discuss the legal problems facing our lawyers. He might end a discussion by saying that the view advanced was not his own, but if the lawyer wished to assert it, that was quite all right.

We quickly learned that Judge Calvert had the integrity, honesty, and independence desired in every judge. He fiercely advocated these characteristics in the legal profession and expected his colleagues to adhere to the same standards. If a particular individual failed to exercise these qualities, Judge Calvert's opinion of that person would change, but he would not state his views publicly.

We could not have had a better counselor. Judge Calvert's keen legal intellect and vast experience on the court, combined with his openness with all the lawyers in our firm, created an invaluable resource. Those of us who battled Clinton Manges for more than ten years on behalf of the Guerra family remember well the benefits of his wise counsel and hands-on help throughout that litigation.

However, Judge Calvert did not place great financial value upon his services and contributions. This view was not entirely due to his years of country law practice during the Depression. Judge Calvert was simply not an acquisitive person. At times, he became dissatisfied with his compensation, but only because he felt that he was being paid too much. He would occasionally take up this matter with the firm, asking that his compensation be reduced—requests we promptly but politely turned down.

Our firm also shared a mutually enjoyable social relationship with Judge Calvert. He liked people and enjoyed their company, whether at lunch, at some outing over a beer, or at the birthday parties we had for him. His birthday, celebrated annually by the firm, was enjoyed by everyone and particularly by Judge Calvert and his wife, Corrine. He was the friend of all at the firm, whether they be a lawyer, secretary, law clerk, receptionist, runner, or handyman. His good humor and kindness made him everyone's favorite.

There was so much to learn from this man. He was direct and candid, yet also civil and courteous. He expected lawyers engaged in adversarial proceedings to represent their clients well and with zeal. Nevertheless, he did not expect opposing lawyers to take this approach personally. He set high standards of impartiality, competence, and temperament for the judiciary. As he observed the influence of "big bucks"—as he called it—on partisan elections, he became an outspoken advocate for a better judicial selection process. He never gave up on that cause.

Judge Calvert was a fine example to all of us. Our years of association with him were indeed fortunate.