

## A LEGACY THAT WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED

*Justice Reuben V. Anderson\**

In 1966, I was on a bus returning from Jackson to Oxford for law school. During the ride, I overheard two white men discussing the upcoming Democratic Primary for the governor's race, which included William Winter, former Governor Ross Barnett, and candidate Jimmy Swan. They referred to William Winter as a "liberal and a n----- lover."

Having heard that, I looked upon him with favor, and I worked for his candidacy in 1967, doing radio ads for him on a black radio station. In that same year, he came to the law school in his capacity as Law Alumni President. Upon encountering me, he reached out and shook my hand, a gesture, still unusual, for white men in that era. Indeed, he was the first white man to have shaken my hand.

We remained friends over the years from that time forward, and later, he appointed me Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit Court District.

In 1986, when I was seeking reelection to the Supreme Court, he did several television commercials for me, helping me to get reelected. Also, in 1996, we were co-chairs of President Bill Clinton's Mississippi campaign for reelection. We traveled all over the state together, but ultimately, we were unsuccessful in carrying the state for the former President.

In all of his endeavors, Governor Winter proved himself to be a gentleman, a scholar, and a Statesman. In all of the fifty-plus years that we were friends, I never heard him speak negatively about anyone, not even his political opponents. He worked tirelessly

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as governor to improve our state's education system. I do not think any other individual impacted education in Mississippi more than Governor Winter, especially as it relates to compulsory school attendance. Later, he contributed more than anyone else to the effort by the Mississippi Economic Council to remove the Confederate Emblem from our state flag. I saw his efforts firsthand as the Chair of the Mississippi Economic Council during that time.

Governor Winter was an avid student of history and its truthful preservation. He served on the board of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for more than fifty years, and that Department is housed in a building rightfully named for him. He was also a driving force for the creation of the new Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. He constantly referred to the two museums as the "largest classroom" in our state. He asked me to serve on the MDAH Board, which I did for twelve years.

Governor Winter was the greatest Mississippian that I ever knew. Each day Governor Winter arose, he went about trying to make Mississippi a better place for everyone. He and his wife Elise leave a legacy which should never be forgotten. Our effort here is to make sure that their legacy will always be remembered.