

G. Bennett Cullison, Jr., 61

Nov. 26, 1932 - July 2, 1994

Harlan - G. Bennett Cullison, Jr., whose practice of law took him from New York to CA and then back to Harlan to resume a family legal tradition begun in 1881, died July 2, 1994 at his home in Harlan. He was 61. He suffered from lung and abdominal cancer. He had survived cancer in 1987, but suffered a relapse in March. His condition was declared terminal in late May. He was the son of G. Bennett Cullison and grandson of George Washington Cullison, both of whom practiced law in Harlan and also served as district court judges in Southwest Iowa. He returned to Harlan in 1975 to establish a practice of civil and criminal litigation.

Born in Harlan Nov. 26, 1932, he graduated from Harlan High School in 1951. He was drafted out of Grinnell College into the Army, and among other things, worked as a lifeguard in a civilian swimming pool in Aschaffenberg, Germany. He graduated from Grinnell in 1957, and after graduating from Columbia University Law School in 1960 found work as an associate with the Wall Street law firm of Thacher, Proffit, Prizer, Crawley and Wood in New York City. But he was soon dissatisfied with commercial litigation, and in 1962 quit to join the Rackets Division of the New York District Attorney's office, then headed by Frank S. Hogan. As Assistant District Attorney, he prosecuted corrupt public officials and members of the New York Mafia. Five years later, in 1967, he served as legislative advisor to the U.S. Senator Jack Miller (Rep. Iowa). The following year, Iowa Attorney General's Richard Turner appointed him to lead the office's special prosecution staff, which consisted of five attorneys and five investigators. He began private legal practice in San Francisco in 1973, but returned to Harlan in 1975, the same year his father stepped down as district court judge. The two practiced law together until the death of his father, G. Bennett Cullison, in 1979. His practice was almost entirely local, but in 1978 he represented the state of Iowa before the United States Supreme Court in a case involving land along the Missouri River claimed by the Omaha Indian tribe. In that case, the state of Iowa prevailed. He was an avid photographer, gardener, motorcyclist and a member of the Shelby County Historical Society. He was past president of the Shelby County Bar Association and Southwest Iowa Bar Association.

He is survived by his mother, Anna May Cullison of Harlan; one daughter, Katharine Cullison of New York City; a son-in-law Yoshiki Shimada, also of New York; two sons, Bennett Cullison III of Santa Rosa, CA and Alan S. Cullison of New York City; a brother, Alan D. Cullison of West Hartford, CT; a sister-in-law, Judith C. Cullison of West Hartford, CT; a sister, Margaret Cullison of Moraga, CA and two grandchildren.

A memorial service was held July 15, at the Congregational United Church of Christ in Harlan with Rev. C.G. "Gary" Nienkamp officiating, and Judge Charles Smith as a special speaker. Pauley Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.