DEC 19 1957
NEW YORK TIMES

Battler on the Bench

Raulston Schoolfield

Special to The New York Times

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., Dec. 18—A casual visitor to Judge Raulston Schoolfield's criminal court in the Chattanooga Courthouse sometimes thinks he has wandered into the wrong room.

He sees a rangy, graying six-footer chatting amiably across the bench with a stream of lawyers, politicians and courthouse hangers-on. People in the courtroom are smoking and gossiping idly.

Man in the News

It takes a moment to realize that the man who wears no judicial robe is a judge and that a criminal proceeding is in progress amid the casual hubbub.

Judge Schoolfield's friends say that the informal atmosphere of his courtroom is a deliberately calculated psychological setting staged by a wise and worldly former criminal lawyer who understands the sentiments "of frightened litigants."

Judge Schoolfield's critics suggest that the unjudicial atmosphere is one more evidence of Schoolfield's lifelong tendency to rebel against the norms and stereotypes of small-city civilization. He was cited yesterday and Tuesday in Senate committee testimony about "pay-offs" and "fixes" in cases he had heard.

Admires General Forrest

Judge Schoolfield, grandson and great-nephew of Confederate soldiers, has long been an avid reader and admirer of the life of Nathan Bedford Forrest, Tennessee's famous Civil War cavalry leader.

General Forrest was a man of savage and aggressive fury when crossed. He delighted in personal combat and the savage passion of hand-to-hand combat.

Judge Schoolfield, now 51 years old, is a man of quiet and sardonic mien, but he is still noted for his hair-trigger temper. His friends say that he will still fight at the drop of a hat. Many are the legends of his schoolday fisticuffs and of his exploits as an adolescent and young man.

As Chattanooga's foremost criminal lawyer until he went on the bench nine years ago, Judge Schoolfield defended a wide range of bully-boy gamblers and toughs from the community slums and from the lawless elements in the nearby East Tennessee mountains. It has been said that he never had a client that he figured he couldn't whip.

A Courtroom Battler

It has also been said that Judge Schoolfield enjoyed the personal companionship of some of the men he defended at the bar of justice. He comes from the upper levels of Chattanooga social strata. And there has never been any breath of scandal attaching to his name in the city where he has made his career.

Before he became a judge, Mr. Schoolfield channeled his natural bellicosity into a courtroom asset. He scored victory after victory before juries entranced at the audacity of his slashing attacks on prosecution witnesses.

Associated Press Wirephoto

Rebels against norms of small-city life.

In politics, Judge Schoolfield is regarded as an expert manipulator and as a forceful campaign orator.

In 1954, he was the avowed segregationist candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination against former Gov. Gordon Browning and the incumbent Gov. Frank G. Clement. Judge Schoolfield received 29,000 votes of a total of 605,000.

Since then Judge Schoolfield has continued to be an outspoken champion of racial segregation.

His father was a lawyer before him with a large Negro practice that Judge Schoolfield inherited. Most of this he lost through his segregationist stand.

He was first elected criminal court judge in 1948 to fill out two years of an unexpired term. In 1950 he won a full eight-year term. He has moved with the local faction that opposes Senator Estes Kefauver, this area's most famous modern lawyer-politician.

Judge Schoolfield attended Baylor Preparatory School in Chattanooga and took his law degree at Cumberland University at Lebanon, Tenn., graduating in 1926. He married Julia McReynolds of Pikeville, Tenn. They have three sons, William, an Omaha business man; Scott McReynolds, an Air Force pilot, and Carter, a law student at Cumberland University.

Potato Production Drops

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (AP)—World production of potatoes this year was reported by the Government today to be 6 per cent smaller than last year. Much of the decline occurred in North America and Europe, the Agriculture Department said.