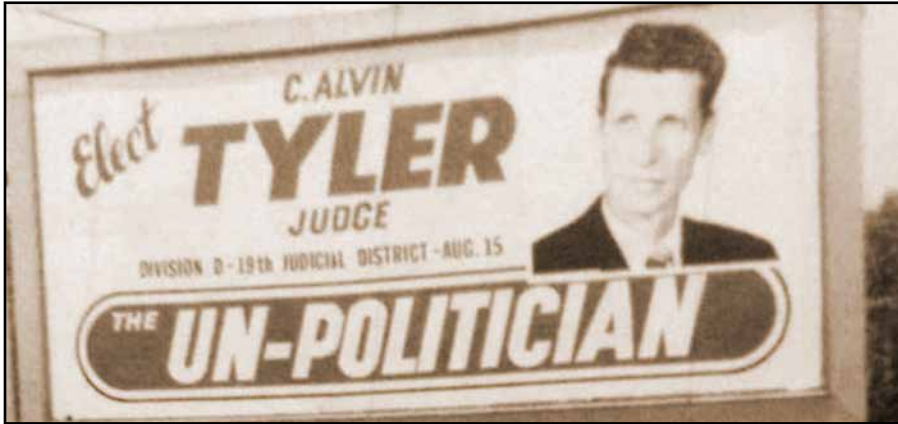


The Last WORD

By Edward J. Walters, Jr.

IPSE DIXIT: DRIVING MISS “PETERBILT”



A “Tyler For Judge” billboard during one of his judicial campaigns. Photo provided by John L. Tyler.

Back in the day, there was a lawyer in Baton Rouge named C. Alvin Tyler. He was a fixture in the courthouse — back when lawyers went to court almost every day. Stories about Alvin abound. He was well known for many reasons, including the fact that he ran (unsuccessfully) in most every judicial election in Baton Rouge. Once, he even ran for the Louisiana Supreme Court against a sitting justice.

You see, you couldn’t advertise back then, but you COULD put your name on big signs during election time. He ran against most anyone. His sign just said “C. Alvin Tyler — Judge” so he could use it over and over again.

He also hired a LOT of young lawyers. His office was a training ground for many, including some prominent lawyers and judges. Notably, one was Kenny Fogg from Denham Springs, who later ascended to become Judge Kenneth J. Fogg of the 21st Judicial District Court and later the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal. Kenny had just graduated from law school and needed a job. Kenny went to a lawyer named A.J. Kling — later Judge A.J. Kling of the 23rd Judicial District Court — to see if he had any openings. He told Kenny to go see Alvin Tyler. Kenny did and, 15 minutes later, he was in court with Alvin handling some of Alvin’s criminal matters.

Alvin also did a lot of collection work. He had a habit of collecting various (and numerous) vehicles and appliances at his office on Main Street. He either accepted them in partial payment of his fees, or he repossessed them and kept them at his office. His clients didn’t want to pay storage fees, so Alvin just kept the vehicles “out back.”

One day, Kenny had to go to court. Alvin didn’t like his associates to use their own vehicles to go to court, so he made them use one of the vehicles “out back.” Not a problem. Either it was the only vehicle that ran, or the only one he could find a key for, but Kenny took a big red dump truck. Kenny drove to the courthouse in Baton Rouge and, knowing he couldn’t get the dump truck in the parking garage, he used the parking lot of the Baton Rouge Blueprint store which is very near the courthouse.

Unbeknownst to him, the bed was full of trash from Alvin’s 60-70 rent houses.

Kenny, unaccustomed to dealing with all the levers in the cab of a dump truck, grabbed for the brake lever. Well, as luck would have it, the lever he chose was not “Brake,” but “Dump.” He frantically tried to stop it, but he couldn’t find the “Stop” lever and dumped the entire load all over the parking lot at Baton Rouge Blue.

He left the bed in the “up” position,



C. Alvin Tyler upon graduating from Louisiana State University Law School. Photo provided by John L. Tyler.

hurried to criminal court, accomplished his tasks and proceeded back to his noble steed. He picked up what trash he could and rushed out of there.

I’m sure that when he was Judge Fogg, he had a soft spot in his heart for young lawyers who complained that they were late because they had trouble parking.

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