

Court of Appeals.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DEATH IN COURT—REMARKS BY DISTINGUISHED LAWYERS,

Special Dispatch to the Gazette.

ANNAPOLIS, February 11 —In the Court of Appeals Mr. Johnson, associated with Edwin Higgins, was to have appeared to-day as counsel in the case of Metcalf vs. the Brooklyn Life Insurance Company, that being the first assignment upon the books. A gloom seemed to have fallen over all in the chamber, and at the hour of 11.30 A. M. When Chief Justice Bartol and associates, with the exception of Judge Bowie, took the bench, perfect quiet reigned. That public announcement of the death of Mr. Johnson would be made in the court, was known to but few, and scarcely a dozen persons, senators, delegates and others were present, beside members of the legal profession. Mr. Higgins arose, and advancing to the bar addressed the court as follows:

With the permission of the court, it is my painful duty to announce to this court the sudden death of my colleague and brother, the Hon. Reverdy Johnson. Privileged with the friendship of the great lawyer, jurist and statesman whose sudden death we mourn; associated with him in the cause which is the first in the assignments this morning; having accompanied him to this city and spent in social intercourse with him the closing hours of his life—as a junior member of the court I beg permission to give expression to those emotions which now stir my heart. I would wreath a frail, humble chaplet for his memory, and yet it is fragrant with the love and veneration which youth owes to a ripe old age, ennobled by great experience, vast learning, exalted patriotism and, may I add, that crowning virtue, Christian character. Reverdy Johnson will need not the pen of the biographer to transmit his name to posterity. It is intimately interwoven in the history of the jurisprudence of our state and nation. It adds lustre to that history. It shines with no unequal light in the line of illustrious men from whom we have received blessings and to whom we are under homage. As sons of this grand old commonwealth, truly may we say we can exclaim, "his fame is our glory." As a patriot and statesman, his life has become a part of the history of the country, for it was devoted at home always to the maintenance of peace and fraternity among our people; and when they had been destroyed by war he hastened to aid in the good work of restoration. Devoted to the principles of the Constitution, he will ever be remembered as one of its ablest expounders. Abroad he represented the nation with singular ability. A noble, generous heart has ceased to beat. A familiar form, a peer among men of mark, has fallen. Reverdy Johnson has gone to the grave crowned with blessings and honors, and a grateful people will revere his memory. I, therefore, in respect to the illustrious dead, move that this court suspend its proceedings until Tuesday next.

Mr. S. Teackle Wallis said: I have just been requested, may it please your honor, by some of my professional brethren to second the motion which my brother Higgins has so feelingly and appropriately made. It would not be proper at this moment, and even it were I should not be equal to the attempt, to do more than join in the application to your honors to suspend the proceedings of the court. The occasion is, indeed, one not only of sadness, but rare melancholy. We are standing almost beside the dead body of our old and cherished and honored friend, not only for many years the father and acknowledged head of our profession in Maryland, but confessedly among its leaders throughout the land. It was but yesterday that he was among us here in this very chamber in all the ripeness of his age and wisdom, in the vigorous maturity of noble faculties, as yet unshaken by decay, and in the full and genial play of those attractive qualities which made him the centre of the affections of his brethren, as he was of their reverence and admiration. In a few short hours, in the fullness of his abounding vitality and spirit, and, as it were, from the very gladness and light of the past, he stepped at one step into the darkness, and now neither this chamber nor the other high places of the land—no! nor any of the places that he loved—shall know him any more. In this city he was born; in this chamber he won the earliest of his laurels and some of the proudest triumphs of his proudest days. It was in some sort meet that his life should have been laid down here also. Would that it could have been less suddenly and sadly. But he died, nevertheless, with his harness on, with all the olden and knightly courage in his heart and scarce less than the old vigor in his arm. An analysis of the intellect, character and labors of

Mr. Johnson and a proper estimate of his relation to the history of the country among the historic men whom Maryland has given to its fame and service do not belong, as I have said, to this hour of mourning. They will be fitly made, I trust, in calmer moments, upon appropriate occasion by the profession which loved and honored him. I am not here, may it please your honors, to speak the judgment of my brethren, but only to interpret their sorrow. In their name, and for the sake of your honors, not less than our own, I respectfully renew the request that your honors will be pleased to suspend the proceedings of the court.

Hon. Alexander Randall spoke with deep emotion of the sad event which had called him there. Referring to the deceased, he said: He was a friend of my childhood; he lived under my father's roof, and in the intimacies of friendship we were bound together. A native of this town, it is due to her citizens to say how much we loved him and appreciated his character. How often have we listened to him here, in this hall abounding with his reminiscences. What can I say more than call your honor's attention to these facts. That such a man, died such a death reminds us forcibly how brief our life is. After paying to Mr. Johnson a beautiful tribute Mr. Randall read the following letter:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, FRIDAY MORNING.—*My Dear Randall:* The remains of Mr. Johnson will be taken from here about 3 o'clock this afternoon to the 3 30 train. Any of the friends who share the kind feelings you expressed this morning can follow the hearse to the depot; and as I have no means of making this fact generally known, please tell it as you may think proper. The procession will be on foot. With great respect, most sincerely,
yours,
CHARLES G. KERR.

Hon. Alex. Randall.

Chief Justice Bartol said: The announcement of the sudden death of our esteemed friend and brother, the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, has filled us with emotions of the deepest sorrow. This mysterious dispensation of Providence is so painful and so sudden that we find it difficult to realize its solemn truth, and impossible to control our feelings sufficiently to speak of him with becoming calmness and decorum, or to pay a fitting tribute to his memory. We shall not attempt now to speak of his great legal learning and ability; his long and distinguished professional career or his eminent public services in the exalted positions which he has filled. To us he has been best known and most esteemed as our friend and professional brother, as a member of our own bar, a native son of Maryland, whose professional career has been identified with the jurisprudence of our state for more than sixty years. It was in this court his earliest professional labors were performed and his first professional triumphs were won. Here the foundations were laid of that fame which has since extended over the whole country, and which will last as long as the records of our judicial history shall endure. It is most appropriated that in this court his fame should be cherished and that fitting honor should be paid to his memory. For this purpose the progress of the business of the court will be suspended, and the court will now adjourn.