

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Sunday, December 23, 2007

Lawyer Hudson Branham dies

The WWII vet worked for 7 decades in Richmond, often helping those in need

BY ELLEN ROBERTSON

Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

Richmond lawyer Hudson Branham, who died Thursday at his Richmond home, had joked that, at 86, that he had outlived all his clients.

For 54 years, he engaged in a "bread-and-butter" practice of doing wills, deeds, Social Security cases and family cases upstairs at 1022½ Hull Street, west of the Manchester Courthouse. For the last 15 years of his career, he worked at home.

"He represented a lot of people in South Richmond who couldn't afford what most lawyers usually charged," said a daughter, Margaret Kimmel of Richmond. "He did a lot of pro bono work before there was a name for it."

At times clients bartered for his fee.

"We got a vacuum cleaner one year. He would work with people and take whatever they could afford," Kimmel said.

One of his special causes was seeking benefits for coal miners who developed black-lung disease.

"He pursued some of the black-lung cases for years and years to try to get benefits for coal miners' children," Kimmel said.

His father and stepmother had taken in foster children at their home in Wise County. Among them was a mentally and physically handicapped boy whose father was a coal miner who had died of black-lung disease.

"My father worked more than 20 years to get benefits awarded to that man," Kimmel said.

Born in Pound, Mr. Branham enlisted in



Mr. Branham

the Army Air Corps in November 1942 because he always wanted to fly, said another daughter, Rebecca Dimon of Fairfax County.

During World War II, he flew 50 missions as a nose gunner and radio operator for the 15th Air Force, including major campaigns over Budapest, Hungary; Regensburg and Munich in Germany; and Vienna, Austria.

He was a member of American Legion Post 137.

Mr. Branham graduated from the University of Richmond's T.C. Williams Law School in 1954.

In addition to his daughters, survivors include his wife of 62 years, Lola Stallard Branham; a son, Stanley Hudson Branham of Richmond; and three grandchildren.

A funeral will be held Thursday at 11 a.m. at Grace Gospel Chapel, 1201 Spirea Road in Chesterfield County. Burial, with military honors, will take place Thursday at 3 p.m. in Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia.