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# MY INTRODUCTION OF OUR DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER IS IN THREE ACTS

*L. Anthony Sutin*

## ACT ONE -INTRODUCTION BY RESUME

**J**UDGE Barefoot Sanders grew up in Dallas, Texas, and went off to college at the Other UT, in Austin, Texas. His college studies were interrupted by service in the United States Navy during World War II, but he returned and began a long career of service by being elected Student Body President.

After graduation from law school, he went into private practice and two years later ran successfully for the Texas legislature. He served three terms in the Texas legislature, and many still recall the sugar cookies in the shape of barefeet that the Sanders family mass-produced in all of the campaigns.

President John F. Kennedy appointed him United States Attorney in Dallas, and he later joined the Johnson Administration first in senior positions in the United States Department of Justice and then in 1967 as President Johnson's legislative counsel in the White House. In 1969, he returned to Dallas and returned to his law practice. In 1972, he was the Democratic candidate for the United States Senate from Texas, but 1972 was not a year for Democrats. He was nominated to the federal bench in Dallas in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter. As a federal district judge in one of the nation's largest cities, and in eight years as Chief Judge, he presided over numerous high-profile cases, ranging from the thirty-year old Dallas school desegregation case, to statewide litigation on mental health and mental retardation.

As a federal judge, he also continued to serve the profession and the judiciary in several leadership positions, including service on the Judicial Conference of the United States, the federal Multidistrict Litigation Panel, and other committees. He has received many honors from legal and governmental organizations, and an honorary law degree from Southern Methodist University.

He has been married to Jan Scurlock Sanders for forty-eight years, and they have four children (including one judge), and nine grandchildren, and two dogs.

## ACT TWO -INTRODUCTION BY NON-LEGAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Actually, Judge Sanders' leadership career began a bit earlier, sixty five years ago, when he was chosen as Texas State Fair Freckle King, after the officials there determined that he had 5,000 plus freckles on his eleven-year-old face. Coronation as Freckle King entitled him to an all-day date with the Texas State Fair Freckle Queen, including lunch with several of the state fair sideshow personalities.

More recently, he was selected by M Magazine as one of four Americans with class, a list that also included Senator Bill Bradley and Edward Bennett Williams.

## ACT THREE -PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

My first job as a lawyer was as a law clerk to Judge Sanders. I could have asked for nothing better. My year in his chambers was exciting, inspiring, and a whole lot of fun. He is usually cited as one of the hardest-working district judges in Texas, and we worked hard. But for Judge Sanders, that was not to impress lawyers or colleagues, or show up good on case management reports, or to seek an elevation to the Court of Appeals, but because the business of judging to him was the business of doing justice. In those file cabinets of cases and filings were real people, facing real problems, and their problems shouldn't have to wait. Judge Sanders was the judge that lawyers knew they could come to at 6 p.m. on a Friday and not get thrown out on their ear. For me, a job where you got up every morning knowing that the only expectation was to help find the answers, solve the problems, and help to find the right result was a wonderful and exciting job. And that it also was OK, even encouraged, to find the humor in it all.

But a more significant influence on me was the way that he treated people. Not just the people that appeared before him as litigants and lawyers, but the maintenance staff, and the mail carrier, and the people that we passed on the street everyday as we walked to lunch at some awful greasy spoon. Everybody knew him. Everybody insisted that they had voted for him. And he had a kind word, and perhaps one of his famous cigars, for everyone. The robes and the title were never a barrier. He drove the court security officers crazy by resisting as long as possible having a magnetometer set up outside the courtroom, because he didn't want those barriers. And for the people of the Dallas area, having a real live person, part of their community, visible and accessible, who happened to be a federal judge, helped to build great respect for the justice system.

For me and my life in the legal profession, Judge Barefoot Sanders has been a role model and a hero.