



Obituaries



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[Dods III, John C.](#)

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John C. Dods III, 74, of Gladstone died after a brief but valiant fight against cancer on Monday, June 2, 2008, at North Kansas City Hospital. He was born July 3, 1933, in Kansas City, Mo., the son of John Chester Dods, Jr. and Alyce Marie (Karstens) (Dods) Coleman. The consummate family man, professional, goodwill ambassador and community booster, John's passing leaves a void that will not soon be filled. John grew up in northeast Kansas City and attended Northeast High School, where he was active in Boy Scouts and YMCA programs. Urged by H. Rowe Bartle to attend Missouri Valley College, John did so and later transferred to the University of Kansas, receiving an A.B. degree in pre-law. He received his J.D. from what was then known as the University of Kansas City Law School in 1957, and was then admitted to practice before the Missouri bar. After joining the Army Reserve, John took a position with the law firm that would become Shook, Hardy & Bacon on February 10, 1958, and had a distinguished practice with the firm for the next 50 years. John served as chair of the firm's litigation division, chair of the business litigation section, and as the firm's second administrative partner and executive committee member. He gained extensive trial experience in federal and state courts in a variety of complex business and commercial cases involving RICO, antitrust, consumer fraud, securities, patent infringement, and warranty and contract disputes. John was lead counsel in more than 40 reported cases and represented clients in cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and in numerous state and federal courts of appeals. He was admitted to practice before the state courts of Missouri; the U.S. District Court for the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri; the Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Federal Circuit Courts of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. John also served as the firm historian, a role he particularly relished. Reflecting on his career at the time the firm celebrated his 50th anniversary, John recalled the vast technological changes that have made the practice more efficient, as well as a bit more complicated, and named as mentors and friends David R. Hardy, Lane Bauer, Dave Clark, Jim Ottman, Charlie Bacon, Bill Shinn, Jim Newsom, and Jewell Lavender. He also recalled watching the firm grow from 15 lawyers when he joined it in the 1950s to more than 500 lawyers in the new millennium. Among his many professional hallmarks, John will always be remembered for the courtesies he extended to support personnel and for his love of good writing. He periodically attended legal writing seminars, striving to improve his already well-crafted style. During his career, John served as Gladstone Municipal Court Judge (1961- 67), First Assistant Clay County Prosecuting Attorney (1967-68), board member (1985-) and president (1991-92) of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Law Foundation, president (1991) of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association, member (1995-97) and chair (1996-97) of the 16th Judicial Circuit Bar Committee, and member (1998-) and chair (1999-) of the Missouri Supreme Court Advisory Committee. For his many professional accomplishments, John was an honored and deserving recipient of countless awards, including the President's Award from the Missouri Bar Association, Purcell Award from the Missouri Bar Foundation, Lifetime Achievement Award from the UMKC Law Foundation, Dean of the Trial Bar from the KCMB, Outstanding Alumnus from the UMKC School of Law, Legal Leader of the Year Award from The Daily Record, Lifetime Achievement Award from the KCMB, and H. Michael Coburn Professional Excellence Award from the KCMB Ross T. Roberts Inn of Court. John's ebullient personality and passion for community service led him to numerous metro-area organizations. He is well known for the many years he participated in on-air pledge drives for public radio station KCUR-FM. His deep, stentorian voice would fill the airwaves at all hours of the day, explaining the value of public radio to the community and expressing special thanks to contributors from the Northland, where, according to John, the sun was always shining. He also served as the president of Legal Aid of Western Missouri (1992) and of the International Visitors Council of Kansas City (1995), finding great enjoyment with his wife, Joan, entertaining many international visitors in their home. He was also a member of the Missouri Valley College Board of Trustees. While John found his calling in the law, he remained active in church affairs over the years and was known to fill a pulpit from time to time when the regular minister of his church was out of town or otherwise unavailable. Among his many hobbies, John most enjoyed golfing, playing tennis, flying small aircraft, and photography. A particularly tenacious and principled man, John worked tirelessly to improve local government. He served on three Clay County Constitution Commissions (1969, 2000 and 2005), in an effort to bring home rule to county government. John was preceded in death by his parents. Surviving are his wife, Joan Carol (McFerrin); son John Clayton Dods, his wife Lisa and their children, John, James and Sophia; daughters Joan Alison Dods and her children, Alex and Lia, and Stefanie Baker, her husband Michael and their children, Caroline, Marcella and Michael Jr.; and siblings, Walter Karstens Dods, James Eugene Dods, Catherine Marie Dods, William Wallace Coleman Jr., Paul Edgar Williams Dods, and David Albert Dods. In lieu of flowers, the family has suggested contributions in John's name to KCUR-FM or the UMKC School of Law Foundation. Visitation will be 2-6 p.m. Sunday, June 8, 2008, at Mt. Moriah & Freeman Funeral Home, 105th and Holmes, Kansas City, Mo. Funeral services will be 10 a.m. Monday, June 9, 2008, at the Colonial Presbyterian Church, 95th and Wornall, Kansas City, Mo.

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