



## Judicial Profile

by Travis J. Cox

# Hon. Ed Kinkeade U.S. District Judge, Northern District of Texas

After watching him for a few minutes on the bench, it is obvious that the Hon. Ed Kinkeade is not the typical stone-faced federal judge. In fact, Baylor Law School Dean Brad Toben once called this 2010 *Baylor Lawyer of the Year* the antithesis of the stereotypical federal judge. For his 30 years spent on the Texas state bench and, now, the federal bench, Judge Kinkeade has defined himself not only through service as a judge, but also as a volunteer and proud public servant.

Judge Kinkeade has perfected his view of the bench since being appointed a federal district court judge in 2002. However, he is not a novice to the bench, having previously served 20 years as a Dallas County criminal court judge, a state district court judge, and a justice on the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Judge Kinkeade treats the bench with the honor and respect it deserves; he does not view it as a bully pulpit. He shuns the tight-fisted approach some judges use, preferring instead to put lawyers in front of him at ease. "When I was in practice, I remember the judges that didn't beat me up, and, honestly, I liked them more. As a judge, I don't need to remind people of the bench's power." His approach is based on the fact that lawyers who feel at ease have a better opportunity to make their case without missing something he might find important. He doesn't view the bench as a place to intimidate, but rather he sees it as a place to provide every lawyer the opportunity to present their case to the best of their ability.

The most obvious way Judge Kinkeade balks at the notion of the stone-faced judge is in his work with his yellow Labrador retriever, Bo. Judge Kinkeade trained Bo as a therapy dog to work with disabled patients. "I go into these trauma centers, and the patients don't



care that I am a federal judge, but they will respond to Bo. They play with him and ignore me." Judge Kinkeade summed up his philosophy on a warm Texas afternoon, "It's important to do service work in our profession. We are our brothers' keepers." Sadly, due to his advanced age, Bo can no longer perform and help trauma patients, yet he and his owner still managed to help Baylor Health Care System launch a pilot program to train service dogs for trauma patients.

In addition to being Bo's sidekick, Judge Kinkeade

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works with the Baylor Health Care System as a trustee and serves on the Dallas Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Alcoholism.

Judge Kinkeade's love of Baylor Law School began when he was an undergraduate student and continued as a law student. He has stayed continually active with the school since his graduation. "I stayed involved with Baylor because I loved it. Because I love the school, giving back to it never seems like work." A former law clerk once quipped that Judge Kinkeade bleeds Baylor green and has a matching pair of cowboy boots to boot!

Besides his work as a district court judge and his work with the task force, Judge Kinkeade serves the legal profession in the classroom as well. For 20 years, he taught ethics at Texas Wesleyan University School of Law, and he currently teaches a class in professional responsibility at Baylor. In fact, Judge Kinkeade does not consider teaching ethics a job, but instead he views it as a service and a valuable opportunity to connect with students who are at the start of their careers. "Teaching students is a great way to ... see what worries them about the legal profession and the world." He views teaching as a chance to impart a bit of wisdom to young lawyers, hopefully preventing them from having to learn lessons the hard way. Judge Kinkeade's teaching goals focus on showing students that being a lawyer (and an advocate) is an honorable profession, and he strives to demonstrate to them that as they start their careers, they can begin to work toward this worthwhile endeavor.

Judge Kinkeade's philosophy and kindness are not lost on those who interact with him. U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Harlin DeWayne Hale says, "Judge Ed Kinkeade is a model for every judge in our courthouse. He treats everyone, lawyers, litigants, and fellow judges, the same—fairly and cordially." Judge Kinkeade's students also have high praise for him, explaining that he maintains a relaxed atmosphere both in the classroom and in the courtroom.

Judge Kinkeade's service to the community, to students, to his alma mater, and to the bench show no signs of slowing down. To him, his service isn't work; it's something he loves and does not see himself stopping. ☺