Robert C. Bibb (1922 - 2015)

Judge Robert C. Bibb, Ret., lifelong Washingtonian, passed away in Everett on July 1, 2015. He was 92. Born July 10, 1922 as an only child to Martin Luther Bibb Jr. and Alyce Marie Gaynor in Seattle, Wash., Robert C. Bibb attended Seattle public schools graduating from Broadway High School in 1940. He entered the University of Washington and became a member of the debate team, the Delta Upsilon Fraternity and United States Marine Corps Reserve. Bibb's college education was interrupted by World War II. He served in the United States Army from February 1943 to June 1946 having been an infantry platoon commander in the 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Division. Involved in heavy combat and wounded at Luzon in the Philippine islands, he was awarded numerous medals and citations including the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He earned the rank of Captain. After his discharge from military service, Bob returned to the UW to study pre-law and earn his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1947, then entered the UW law school graduating in 1949. In June 1950, Robert married his sweet heart Karen Margit Nelson and together they affectionately became known to friends and family as 'Bosco' and 'Mugs'. Bosco joined a law practice in Seattle for a short time then moved to Arlington, Wash. in 1954 to establish his own practice, later to become Bibb & Bailey. The young attorney was an active Snohomish County and Arlington resident. By 1966 he was the City Attorney for Arlington and later was a part-time judge for the Cascade District Court. He served a President of North Snohomish County Communities and was a member of the Arlington Volunteer Fire Department. He was elected twice to the Arlington School Board and was Chairman from 1970-72. He also served as the President of the Snohomish County Bar Association in 1973 and was selected as 'Lawyer of the Year' by that organization in 2005. In 1974, Bibb was appointed as a Judge to the Superior Court for Snohomish County by then Governor Dan Evans. He was subsequently re-elected to the position five times. During his tenure on the bench, Bibb was Chairman of the Washington Association of Superior Court Judges committee on Institutions (Prisons) and represented his colleagues on the State Judicial Council. He was the first Administrative Judge for the Snohomish County Superior Court. He had his share of cases which garnered widespread media coverage including the 1982 trial of Ruth Coe and the 1985 murder trial of Ruth Neslund. Throughout his career, Bibb was always considered a fair, compassionate and well-prepared lawyer and judge. He earned the highest rating possible from other members of the bar and the judiciary in the United States as having high ethical standards and professional ability. He mentored many young lawyers over the course of his distinguished career. Bibb was an active participant at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev. participating both as a student and later as a faculty member. He served on a nationwide Right-to Die committee in the 1990s whose task it was to look at the legal issues related to the difficult subject of euthanasia and assisted suicide. In the mid-1990s Bibb was a member of a select group of judges to travel to Cuba to look at the judicial system there, share his experience and participate in high-level discussions about the U.S. judicial system. Bibb worked for nearly 83 years, starting at age 9 when he sold Liberty Magazine to help support his struggling parents. He actually retired three times. Retiring first from the courtroom in 1992, he returned to practice law in Everett, becoming Of Council with Deno Millikan Law Firm, PLLC. The former judge applied his skills as a member of JAMS (the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, Inc.) and the not-for-profit American Arbitration Association, as a mediation and arbitration lawyer who reviewed disputes and facilitated resolution of ethical problems until retiring the second time in about 2010. One of the accomplishments for which Judge Bibb was most proud was establishment of the Snohomish County Guardian Monitoring Program (GMP) which provides oversight for cases whose guardians are non-professionals and which works to bring cases that have lapsed into delinquent status back into compliance with the Court. The program also provides assistance to prospective guardians for the benefit of their wards. The GMP and its documentation have led to improved oversight of guardians and have been used as a benchmark for counties across the State of Washington and for guardianship programs established across the Nation. The program has been run solely by volunteers including other retired Judges which until recently were led by Bibb. The GMP was established on May 1, 2000. Bibb finally retired for the third and final time on May 1, 2015 at the age of 92. Bosco loved both classical and Dixieland music. He was a voracious reader and extremely knowledgeable about world history and politics. In the winter he regularly cross-country skied in the Cascades mountains. In the summer he hiked: often with his children in the Cascades and later on trekking around the globe including the Himalayas in 1989. Bosco and Mugs traveled extensively, visiting six of seven continents. He also was an avid sailor and loved to spend time on his sailboat "Decision". Bibb is survived by Karen, his wife of 65 years; daughters, Allison Bibb-Rice of Bellingham, and Charlotte Hammond (Stephen); and granddaughters, Kerstin and Brianna of Potomac Falls, Va.; brother-in law, Ralph Coon of Olympia; and numerous nieces and nephews. A public memorial service is planned for August 29, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Evergreen Funeral Home, 4504 Broadway, Everett. In lieu of flowers, gifts can be made to The Boys and Girls Club of Snohomish County, bgcsc.org.