

Gregory S. Coleman

PARTNER (IN MEMORIAM)



Credentials

- University Of Texas
J.D., *with high honors*
Managing Editor, *Texas Law Review*
Chancellors Honor Society
- Texas A&M University
M.B.A., *summa cum laude*
- Texas A&M University
B.S., Mathematics, *magna cum laude*
- Law Clerk to The Hon. Clarence Thomas
U.S. Supreme Court
- Law Clerk to The Hon. Edith Hollan Jones
U.S. Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit
- Solicitor General of Texas, 1999-2001
- Admitted to Practice:
Texas

Gregory S. Coleman, a nationally recognized appellate lawyer and the first Solicitor General of the State of Texas, passed away November 23, 2010. He received his J.D. with high honors from The University of Texas Law School in 1992, where he also served as Managing Editor of the *Texas Law Review* and was a member of the Chancellors Honor Society. Greg clerked for Chief Judge Edith Hollan Jones on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and for Justice Clarence Thomas on the United States Supreme Court.

Greg's record of academic excellence, his clerkship experiences, along with an innate sense of intellectual curiosity and discipline proved to be the basis of an extraordinarily successful appellate law practice, in both federal and state courts around the country. First at the Austin office of New York-based Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, where he headed the firm's national Supreme Court and appellate practice, and then beginning in 2007 with Yetter Coleman LLP, Greg handled appeals across a broad legal spectrum, including all types of complex business litigation, undertaken on behalf of clients ranging from Fortune 500 companies to governmental entities to aggrieved individuals. Greg was especially passionate about his advocacy related to public policy and constitutional issues, many times involving years of litigation and performed on a pro bono basis.

As a well-known national appellate advocate, Greg appeared frequently before the United States Supreme Court, where he held the distinction of having argued the most cases of any lawyer in Texas. His cases included back-to-back wins in two closely watched appeals during the Supreme Court's 2009 term. Those decisions—one on behalf of a small Texas governmental entity seeking an exemption from federal oversight of its elections and the other on behalf of Connecticut firefighters denied promotion on account of their race—brought Greg and his team of appellate litigators a wave of national public recognition and accolades, including designation of his law firm on the prestigious Appellate Hot List by the *National Law Journal* in 2010. Greg last appeared before the Supreme Court in October 2010, arguing on behalf of a Texas district attorney sued by a prison inmate. He was inducted into the Texas Appellate Hall of Fame by the State Bar of Texas Appellate Section in 2015.

Greg interrupted his career in private practice to serve as Texas's first

Solicitor General, a position created by then-Attorney General John Cornyn in 1999. In that capacity, Greg acted as the state's top appellate lawyer, charged with overseeing its most important appeals. Among his many appeals for the State, he defended the affirmative action admissions program of The University of Texas System. As the first Solicitor General, Greg served all Texans with great distinction by, among other accomplishments, developing standards of professionalism and excellence for the post that endure to this day.

Greg strongly believed in public service. In addition to serving as Solicitor General and acting as an advocate for those raising constitutional claims, Greg was dedicated to organizations and causes that benefited the public at large and the legal profession in particular. He was an adjunct professor at the South Texas College of Law and at The University of Texas School of Law and frequently lectured on current legal topics, including an annual round-up of the U.S. Supreme Court term given at locations around the country. Greg was President-Elect of the Texas Law Review Association; former Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice; a member of the American Law Institute; and a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. He was a member of the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross of Central Texas.

Throughout his legal career, Greg was profoundly interested in the development of young attorneys working around him. His successes as a lawyer were made possible in part by a cadre of former judicial clerks he assembled in his Austin office from around the country, often sharing lunch with them on a daily basis while mentoring them into successes in their own right, and in whom he took great pride. Greg's interest in young attorneys extended to important events in their personal lives. For the newborns of all attorneys at the Yetter Coleman firm, Greg and his wife Stephanie provided a baby blanket embroidered with the infant's full name, ultimately ordering so many blankets for his growing firm that the Colemans' Austin linen shop speculated that Greg was an obstetrician. All attorneys, regardless of age, received greetings from the Colemans on their birthdays.

Outside the law, Greg's interests were as wide-ranging as his talents. All combined his love for his family, his country, and the outdoors. He was a voracious reader, a lifelong student of American history, an avid golfer, and an accomplished sportsman. One of his greatest pleasures was fishing with his sons on his boat out of Port O'Connor. To those who knew him, it was clear that the most important part of his life was spending time with his family. Greg was a devoted member and leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A deep and abiding faith in his Savior directed Greg throughout all aspects of his life.

Greg was a rarity in the world of accomplished people—an individual who never forgot that his ultimate measure was in the dignity and respect with which he treated others. This sense of fundamental decency was apparent in every aspect of his life, to his professional colleagues, his friends, and his family. He was admired and respected for his accomplishments, but it was his inner nature that inspired confidence, loyalty, and love in those who knew him.