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## Community mourns loss of Charles R. Terry

By Denise Williams, Tribune Staff Writer

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Long-time Morristown attorney Charles R. Terry passed away early Monday morning at Lakeway Regional Hospital.

"It's a sad day," said Federal Court Judge Ronnie Greer this morning from Hilton Head, S.C. "Not only has the legal profession lost one of its legal greats, but I've lost a good friend."

Greer said he and Terry had been friends for 30 years.

"Charlie taught me a great deal of what I know about practicing law," he said. "It's because of Charlie Terry and Tom Hall that I came to Greeneville to practice law."

Another colleague, Morristown attorney Ed Sempkowski, shared that sentiment.

"Charles Terry was a terrific trial lawyer. He was innovative, charismatic and fearless," said friend and fellow attorney Ed Sempkowski. "He was a champion for the worker, for the citizen unfairly accused of a crime. He was an attorney for the little people."

Greeneville Attorney Nat Coleman said he remembered when Terry first started practicing law.

"He was always a gentleman and always a friend," Coleman said. "He fought like a tiger, but when it was over, it was over. He practiced law the way it should be done."

Judge James E. Beckner, former criminal judge from Hamblen County, said this morning that Terry had appeared in his courtroom on numerous occasions.

"Charlie was a lawyer's lawyer. I had a huge amount of respect for his integrity and as a lawyer. I considered him a personal friend, as well," Beckner said.

In addition to his legal practice, Terry was also active in a large number of other community causes.

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George O. Haggard Jr., president of the Morristown-Hamblen Hospital Foundation, said that Terry was one of the first board members of the foundation. Terry also served at the 2005 honorary chair of the foundation's annual heart gala.

"He was very instrumental in the past in getting us organized and getting us going," Haggard said. "He's just been a big supporter of all the operations at the hospital. Charlie had his thumbprint on it all. We've lost somebody that has proven to be a leader in the community and a leader at the hospital."

"Charles Terry was more than a patient. He was a friend," said Morristown cardiologist Dr. Sunil Ramaprasad. "I will forever be grateful for his support of the Morristown-Hamblen Hospital Foundation and our heart program. He was a strong pillar in the community and someone I admired. He will be missed."

"Charlie was a good friend to Morristown and Hamblen County. His interests were wide and visionary. To my knowledge, he never undertook a project without committing all of his interests and energy toward its success," said R. Jack Fishman, president of Lakeway Publishers Inc.

"His interests were varied and wide ranging. He was comfortable and generous, entertaining business and industrial clients that may be considering Morristown, assisting in the development of Walters State and All Saints' Episcopal School to provide a better education for our youth and the development of the medical facilities on our community," Fishman continued.

"Charlie's interest in family and the growth of his law firm were top priorities from day one. Truly a student of law, he was held in high esteem by his opponents and colleagues," Fishman said. "An unparalleled interest in the University of Tennessee sports and Tennessee Walking Horses were hobbies that he shared with friends and family. Morristown has lost a supporter and builder."

"Charles Terry was a man of high integrity who really made a significant mark on this community," said former WSCC president Dr. Jack Campbell. "Charlie had the unique quality of relating to all people, regardless of their socioeconomic level. He helped a lot of people."

One of the great loves of his life that Terry shared with his wife, Florence, was the love of horses.


In 2008, he was inducted into the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Hall of Fame in Shelbyville. A long-time owner of outstanding Walking Horses, including part-ownership in the 2001 World Grand Champion, Pride's Jubilee Encore, Terry also used his law degree to help fellow enthusiasts.

"I met Charlie through the Walking Horse business almost 50 years ago and it is one of the true blessings of my life," said long-time friend David Howard. "He has supported the horse industry with his time, talent and money and it was always a joy to see him and Florence at the shows. Florence was the better judge of horses than Charlie and I always reminded him of that fact."

"He will be difficult to replace in this industry and impossible to replace in this world," Howard said.

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The Rev. Dale Gilbert, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, shared a story.

Gilbert said that when Terry was a boy, a Methodist minister in the area raised money to take underprivileged kids in the area to a church camp. Terry's parents were unable to pay for it so the preacher took him.

"That first night at camp, he wrote a letter to his mother, fascinated that he had crossed six county lines that day," Gilbert said, adding that even after traveling around the world, Terry still remembered that day.

"One of the last charitable projects he did was to raise money for the United Methodist Church Camp," Gilbert said. "He never got over being that little boy that someone sent to camp. Charlie did a lot that nobody knew about."

Funeral arrangements for Terry will be announced by Allen Funeral Home in Morristown.

