

Judge Phillips to Retire as Judge Of Superior Court After 22 Years

One of Grays Harbor's most respected public servants will step down from the Superior court bench within the next 30 days, bringing to a close of a public career that spans almost 40 years.

For Superior Judge J. H. Phillips announced this week that he would retire from his Grays Harbor superior court position, an office which he has held for the past 22 years, being elected to the bench in 1928.

Judge Phillips was born in the Great Smokies and Blue Ridge mountains district of North Carolina, and grew up among the mountain folk of that district. After completing his schooling in his native state he went on to Carlisle University at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and divided his time between the University and Dickinson law school that was also at Carlisle.

Young Phillips was an outstanding athlete, and conference rulings were not as strict in those days. He virtually worked overtime at football, playing on the teams of both Carlisle and Dickinson, except when they played each other, when he sat on the benches and remained absolutely neutral.

After finishing at Dickinson, Phillips went on to Northwestern University and took post-graduate work. After finishing at Northwestern he got married, and in February 1904 he arrived in the bustling merchant community of Aberdeen, after having left Mrs. Phillips with friends in Seattle.

For a few years he did not make use of his law training, but worked in the mills, kept books, did concrete work and other things.

It was football actually that put him into practice as a lawyer. His fame as an early day gridiron great

was not long in catching up to him in Aberdeen, and it was through playing football that he formed an association that led to the start of his law practice.

Robert Taggart, a great football fallback at Westminster college,

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had also come to Aberdeen and was practicing law when he and Phillips became teammates on the Aberdeen football team. They formed a partnership and Phillips started his long association with the law.

Phillips and Taggart had one other thing in common, an admiration for the Constitution of the United States, upon which each was an authority.

The young lawyer was soon one of the town's accepted leaders and was elected mayor in 1917. To him must go much of the credit for the Aberdeen water system, for the starting of such a system was one of the planks upon which he was elected. During his administration the city also bought and rebuilt the West bridge.

He served in the legislature from 1925 to 1927, and in 1928 was elected to the superior court, where he has served ever since, being elected in most cases without opposition.

Judge Phillips has no immediate plans for after his retirement. He would like to revisit the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge mountains and the folk he says are termed "hill killers" but are "fine people."

It could be he'll spend some of the time with Mrs. Phillips baby sitting with the new grandchild . . . the first third generation member of the Phillips family.