

# **ERNEST CLAYTON “SONNY” HORNSBY**

**Twenty-sixth Chief Justice - 1988-1995**

*BORN: October 8, 1936; Montgomery, Alabama*

Sonny Hornsby grew up in Tallassee, Alabama. He graduated from Auburn University and earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Alabama School of Law.

Following his graduation from law school in 1960, Hornsby launched a 28-year career as a successful lawyer and businessman in the Tallassee area and served in all three branches of government. He was Assistant Superintendent of Insurance under Governor John Patterson, state senator for Tallapoosa and Elmore counties, and City Judge for the City of Tallassee.

Hornsby's professional involvement is extensive. He is a past president of the Elmore County Bar Association, the Alabama Trial Lawyers Association, and the Alabama State Bar. In 1978-79 he was a member of the American Bar Association's House of Delegates. He is also a member of the International Society of Barristers and a member and past president of the Alabama Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

In the 1988 general election, Hornsby was elected chief justice of the Supreme Court and assumed office on January 17, 1989. Highlights of his tenure as head of Alabama's judicial system include the construction of the new judicial building, adoption of new rules of criminal procedure and of evidence, trial and appellate court automation, and implementation of time standards, putting Alabama in the lead nationally in the timely disposition of cases on all levels.

Sonny Hornsby is married to the former Judith O'Daniel of Tallassee. They have three children, two of whom are lawyers, and two grandchildren.

*Portrait by FRANK TAURIELLO, American, born 1927  
Oil on canvas, circa 1992*