

JOHN RUSSELL TYSON

Nineteenth Chief Justice: 1906-1909

BORN: November 28, 1856; Lowndes County, Alabama

DIED: March 27, 1923; Rochester, Minnesota



Portrait by MARGUERITE EDWARDS
American, 1943-
Oil on Canvas, 1976

After receiving his basic education in the Lowndes County public schools, John Russell Tyson was awarded a bachelor's degree from Howard College in Marion, Alabama, in 1877 and a law degree two years later from Washington and Lee University. He was admitted to the Alabama Bar in 1879 and began practicing law in Hayneville.

From 1880 to 1882 Tyson represented Lowndes County in the General Assembly, and in 1884 he moved to Montgomery and continued practicing law. In 1889 he was elected to the Montgomery City Council, serving as its presiding officer and mayor pro tem from May 1891 to October 1892, when he was elected judge of the Second Judicial Circuit.

Tyson left the circuit bench in 1898 upon being elected associate justice of the Supreme Court. In 1906, he was elected to the position of chief justice, defeating incumbent Samuel Weakley in the Democratic Primary. On February 28, 1909, he resigned from the high court and resumed the practice of law in Montgomery. He served one term in Congress beginning in 1921 and was re-elected but died just before Congress convened for his second term.

In October 1879, John Russell Tyson married Mary Dossie Jordan. They had five children.

Junius Moore Riggs Collection

Location: Hallway Outside Antebellum Gallery, 3rd Floor, Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building