

PELHAM JONES MERRILL

Associate Justice - 1953-1976

BORN: December 1, 1907; Heflin, Alabama
DIED: November 5, 1991; Montgomery, Alabama

Pelham Jones Merrill graduated from Heflin High School in 1922 and from the University of Alabama in 1926 at age eighteen. He then taught school and coached for five years at West Blocton and in 1929 taught adult literacy at the local opportunity school. After he earned his law degree from the University in 1934, he began practicing law in Heflin.

In addition to his law practice, Merrill was elected to represent Cleburne County in the state legislature three different times—1936, 1947, and 1951. Twice he was elected Speaker Pro Tem of the House. He also received accolades from the press for his effectiveness and resourcefulness as a legislator. During World War II he served in the Army Air Corps.

In 1952 Merrill ran for a seat on the Supreme Court, a vacancy having been created by the retirement of Justice Arthur B. Foster. He was re-elected in 1958, 1964, and 1970. Judge Merrill retired in 1976, having not only kept his cases current throughout his 23 years of service on the court but also having helped out his colleagues when they fell behind schedule.

In 1978 Justice Merrill was elected to the Alabama Academy of Honor.

Pelham Jones Merrill married Gladys Mae Morrison of West Blocton in August of 1936.