

Buckner Thruston

(9 Feb 1764 – 30 Aug 1845)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Senator from Kentucky; born in Petsoe Parish, Gloucester County, Va., February 9, 1764; pursued preparatory studies; was graduated from William and Mary College at Williamsburg, Va., in 1783; studied law; moved to Lexington, Fayette County, Va. (now Kentucky), in 1788; was admitted to the bar and commenced the practice of law; member of the Virginia Assembly in 1789; after Kentucky was organized as a State was elected clerk of the first State senate in 1792; appointed one of Kentucky's three commissioners to settle the boundary dispute between the States of Kentucky and Virginia; district judge of Kentucky in 1791; judge of the circuit court in 1802 and 1803; appointed United States judge of the court of the Territory of Orleans in 1804, but declined; elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate and served from March 4, 1805 to December 18, 1809, when he resigned, having been appointed to a judicial position; appointed judge of the United States Circuit Court for the District of Columbia and served from December 18, 1809, until his death in Washington, D.C., on August 30, 1845; interment in the Congressional Cemetery.

The National Intelligencer, September 1, 1845

Death of Judge Thruston

Died, at his residence in this city, on Saturday morning last, in his 83d year, the Hon. Buckner Thruston, Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Columbia. Judge T. was a native of Virginia, but emigrating to Kentucky, his fine abilities and liberal attainments brought him early into public life, and in 1805 we find him representing his adopted State in the Senate of the United States, in which he continued to serve until January, 1810, when he resigned his seat to accept from President Madison the judicial appointment which he held to the period of his death. It is not for us to trace the history or judicial character of this eminent and esteemed citizen. That task will be performed better and more appropriately by other hands. It will suffice for us to add to this brief notice, simply, that the deceased was a gentleman in the best sense of the term; that his superior abilities and classical attainments, combined with his urbane manners in private life, made his company pleasing, instructive, and everywhere acceptable, and procured for him general esteem. He has descended to the tomb at a ripe age, and has left a large circle of descendants, relatives, and friends to cherish his memory.

Circuit Court of the District of Columbia for the County of Washington

At a meeting of the Bar and Officers of the Court, on the 30th day of August, 1845, on motion, Richard S. Coxe, Esq. was appointed Chairman, and Wm. Brent, Secretary.

On motion of Jos. H. Bradley, Esq. the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this meeting have heard with deep and sincere emotion of the death of the Hon. Buckner Thruston, for many years a Judge of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia,

Resolved, That we lament the death of an individual with whom we have been long associated in the administration of justice, and in the intercourse of society, distinguished by his elegant attainments as a scholar, for his extensive erudition, for his integrity on the bench, and his accomplishments as a gentleman.

Resolved, That we sincerely sympathize with his afflicted family in the death of Judge Thruston, full of years and ripe in character.

Resolved, That the District Attorney be requested to submit these proceedings to the Circuit Court, and to ask the Court to permit them to be entered on their minutes, and to unite with the Bar and Officers of the Court in paying respect to the memory of the deceased, and that we will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

Resolved, That a copy of these proceedings be respectfully communicated to the family of the deceased, and is published in the several newspapers in this District.

James Hoban, Esq., District Attorney, submitted the above proceedings to the Court, accompanied with some just remarks on the character and virtues of the deceased.

To which the Hon. Wm. Cranch, Chief Judge, made the following reply on behalf of the Court:

The Court has received with great sensibility information of the death of the Hon. Buckner Thruston, one of the Judges of this Court.

Having been long associated with him in the discharge of our judicial duties, we cannot but deeply feel the loss we have sustained. His judicial life has been prolonged beyond the usual term of human life, and has been uniformly marked with strict integrity.

But this is not the time or place to pronounce his eulogy. His long and faithful services are well known and appreciated in the community, and will be long remembered.

The surviving Judges deeply sympathize with the gentlemen of the Bar, officers of the Court, and the afflicted family of the deceased, and will join in the testimonials of respect proposed by the Bar and officers of the Court, and will order their proceedings to be entered on the minutes of the Court. The Court will now adjourn. Wm. Brent, Clerk.

The National Intelligencer, September 3, 1845

The Funeral of the Late Thruston took place last Monday morning. The remains of the venerable Judge were deposited in Congress Burial Ground. The funeral services of the Episcopal Church were most impressively read by the Rev. L. Gilliss, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Stringfellow. A great number of citizens attended the funeral solemnities out of respect to the memory of the deceased, amongst whom were noticed Senator Benton, Major General Scott, and General Van Ness. The following gentlemen acted as pall-bearers: The Hon. Judge Cranch, the Hon. Judge Morsell, the Hon. Judge Dunlop, General Walter Jones, W.W. Seaton, Esq., James Henry, Esq., Joseph H. Bradley, Esq., John Marbury, Esq., General Roger Jones, and General Roger Weightman.