

Gerald Barrett, President, 1972

Interview with wife Phyllis

July 21, 2009

Gerry went to Lehigh University and Columbia Law School. He was with a firm on Wall Street until the war when he became a lawyer for the Office of Price Administration (OPA). He served as Director of the OPA in the Pacific until the end of World War II. He then moved to UNC-Chapel Hill where he taught for 30 years. His arbitration awards are in the University library there. Gerry retired in 1980; he died in 1990. Lewis Gill's tribute is found in Volume 44 of the Academy's Proceedings (1991), pages vi and vii.

The Barretts were good friends with Rolf Valtin (Academy President, 1975), Jim Hill (Academy President, 1969), Lew Gill (Academy President, 1971), Paul Guthrie (Academy President, 1957), Gabe Alexander (Academy President, 1961), and Ralph Seward (Academy President, 1947-1949), among many others. Paul Guthrie suggested arbitration to Gerry, and he began this career in 1952. Some of his cases were in the textile, airline, tire, and cigarette industries.

Gerry's philosophy was that serving as a labor arbitrator was a public service. For this reason, he often resisted friends' encouragement to raise his rates.

Although Gerry has been gone for 20 years, Mrs. Barrett still gets calls from companies trying to hire him as an arbitrator.

Gerry's decisions were rarely challenged, but in one case, the decision was appealed in the courts. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled in Gerry's favor by a 9-0 vote.

Gerry's Presidential Address, "The Common Law of the Shop," is found in the Academy's Proceedings for 1973. Other articles of his are in the Academy's Proceedings for 1965 and 1970.