



REASON CHESNUT BELL served on the Court of Appeals for 10 years, from 1921-1931; on the Supreme Court for 17 years, from 1932-1949. He served as Presiding Justice from 1942-1945, as Chief Justice 1945-1946, and thereafter as Chief Justice Emeritus. He was born in Churchill Community in Webster County, Georgia, on January 28, 1880, and died February 19, 1962.

He attended public schools in Webster County and Richland High School in Stewart County. He was graduated from Mercer University in 1904 with a Bachelor of Law degree. He began the practice of law in Sylvester and shortly thereafter in Cairo, Georgia.

He married Jennie Vereen of Moultrie, Georgia, on January 28, 1908. Two children were born of this union, Vereen and Alexandria Bell Daniels. For details as to family history and other achievements, see the memorial dated July 9, 1962, in 218 Georgia Reports, pages XXI-XXXVI.

He was Solicitor-General of the Albany Judicial Circuit for eight years; Judge of this circuit for over a year until his appointment to the Court of Appeals; Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court for three years; Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for about a year and a half, and, although reelected, yielded the position to his friend, Justice Frank Jenkins.

He was a trustee of Mercer University for 10 years and was president of its Alumni Association. "In his home, his love and thoughtfulness for his wife were always apparent. Finally, his abiding faith in his church and God were constantly manifested in his every endeavor." Someone said, "He was a Christian first and...his acts were always motivated by Christian principles."

Chief Justice Fred Vinson of the U. S. Supreme Court said of Bell: "When that man walked into this room, I could feel that I was in the presence of greatness." He possessed the four attributes of a judge according to Socrates: "to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly and to decide impartially." He measured up to the Blackstone image: "He it was that first gave to the law the air of science. He found it a skeleton, and clothed it with life; he embraced the cold statue, and by his touch it grew into youth and beauty." He was known as "Chess" Bell in college. When in the Albany Circuit of eight counties in the "horse and buggy era," he spent much time "riding the various counties." He loved justice and "was the embodiment of the law in that divine sense of righteousness and truth and love."