

The Savage Family Tree – W.J. Savage, Jr.

The Savage Family Tree has “deep roots” in Bolivar and Hardeman County, Tennessee.

First Generation

Woodson's Hardeman County family traces back to his great-grandfather, Jefferson Casey Savage (1820-1896), who was born in Kentucky, but moved here with his family when he was four years old. Jefferson Casey served in the Civil War, was a farmer and in 1872 was elected Hardeman Country Trustee, a position he held for 20 years. (His portrait and his wife's, Lucy Dean Savage, hang in the Little Courthouse Museum.)

Second Generation

Woodson's grandparents were Giles Monroe and Laura Robertson Savage. Her father, Alexander Thomas Robertson, was also an attorney in Bolivar. Giles Monroe was born in northern Hardeman County and moved to Bolivar in 1872. He was a partner in the Savage & Emerson Drug Store and was postmaster. He was also president of the Bank of Bolivar from 1930-1935.

Laura Robertson's Great uncle was Julius C. N. Robertson who was the first Sheriff of Hardeman County from 1823-1838. "His military training under General Andrew Jackson made him familiar with firearms and ready to cope with desperate characters and the thousands of Indians who sometimes thronged the streets of Bolivar". Laura Robertson's grandfather was Charles Robertson, the brother of James Robertson who was known as the "Father of Tennessee".

Third Generation

Woodson's parents were Woodson Jasper and Nina Eveline Campbell Savage. Woodson Sr. owned and operated the W. J. Savage Hardware Company for over forty years in Bolivar. He was married to Nina for over seventy-one years. Woodson Sr. had three sisters Pearl Savage Mitchell, Rose Savage Waller, and Nelle Savage Campbell; Nina had

three brothers John Campbell, Tom Campbell and Willie Campbell. To make the family tree more interesting...Woodson's sister Nelle married Nina's brother Tom...later producing double cousins and so forth on down the line.

Nina Savage's father was Thomas P. Campbell, Bolivar Registrar for over 20 years, and was known as "Bolivar's Walking Historian" ... he died at 97 years of age.

Fourth Generation

Woodson was born in 1914 in Hardeman County, Tennessee...the son of Woodson Jasper and Nina Eveline Campbell Savage. He had an older brother, Casey Eugene, who was an architect in Raleigh, North Carolina and an older sister, Evelyn Savage Holmes, who literally worked all over the world with her husband Horace Holmes who was a noted Agricultural Specialist with various U.S. Government Agencies and the Ford Foundation. Both his brother and sister preceded him in death. Woodson J. Savage, Jr. was the last surviving member of his generation.

Fifth Generation

Woodson met Audrey Downer in Hickory Valley, Tennessee. In 1941, they were married in Hernando, Mississippi. Their married life began in Bolivar and continued there for 63 happy years until her death in June 19, 2004. They had two children. Woodson J. Savage, III, now of Cordova, Tennessee and Kenneth Eugene Savage, Sr. of Bolivar.

Sixth Generation

Woodson had two grandsons ...

- Kenneth Eugene Savage, Jr (Gene) who was raised in Bolivar (the last of six generations to do so)...son of Ken and Janelle Savage. He now lives in Eads, Tennessee.
- Woodson J. Savage, IV ... (Jay) son of Woody and Janet Savage. He lives in Atlanta, GA.

Seventh Generation

Woodson had one great-grandson ... Quentin Raynor Savage of Laconia, TN...son of Gene Savage and Deedy Savage.

Most of these four generations of Savages are buried here at Union Cemetery (along with their spouses and infant children and other relatives with the names of Campbell, Emerson, Galloway, Holmes, King, Mitchell, Robertson, Waller). So, it is only fitting and proper that we honor one of their own here today.

Woodson J. Savage, Jr. spent his entire life in Bolivar, Tennessee (except for his college years at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville).

- During his school years, Woodson was known for his intelligence and friendliness. He was involved in a number of school activities such as public speaking and acting.
- During his senior year he served as class vice president and was graduated as Salutatorian-Class of '33.
- He attended the University of Tennessee Knoxville where he studied pre-law and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, with a major in English and a minor in Psychology.
- After six years of study, he earned his "Doctor of Jurisprudence" degree in 1939 at the University of Tennessee--Knoxville.
- Shortly thereafter, his career as a Hardeman County attorney began. That summer, Woodson passed his Bar exams. Early in the fall, he began working with Attorney Bert Hodge. Their law offices were located on Main Street, behind the Bank of Bolivar.

- His law practice was never limited to one phase of the law. He preferred General Law because it included Chancery Court work, criminal, real estate, adoptions and divorces, farms, homes and land titles, etc. Several times he took cases as far as the Tennessee Supreme Court.
- Woodson was the last of the one-man law firms...he did his own legal research, he did his own typing as he never had a secretary to type or answer his phone. In those days, when you typed legal documents with carbon paper...and you made a mistake...you got to type the entire page over again! He even cleaned his own office. He worked out of an upstairs office in Bolivar and paid only \$20 a month for office rent (that included electricity).
- When Woodson and Audrey first married, they lived with his parents Woodson and Nina Savage. Later, his dad, gave them a small house at 509 East Market Street in Bolivar which they later enlarged and expanded several times.
- Woodson and Audrey Savage essentially lived their entire married life at 509 East Market Street...Woodson was the only man I ever knew that NEVER made a monthly house payment in his life! He truly lived up to his English—Scotch, Irish heritage.
- His first family car was a black 1949 Ford that he purchased in the early 50's. Prior to owning this car, he walked to and from work and walked home for lunch every day.
- Woodson always dressed in suit and tie...even on vacations! His idea of eating out was going to a cafeteria or eating the 99 cent Wendy's menu!
- People who dealt with him knew him to be extremely fair, honest and hard working. He was always very thorough and meticulous in his work. He would tell a client up front what his fee would be...and regardless of the time and effort expended...that was the fee he charged them!
- He was the last of a dying breed ... he retired from his law practice in 1984 after 44 years of service to the community and Hardeman County.

- Woodson always had a variety of interests. He was well known throughout the area for his interest in weaving. In his lifetime, he has woven dozens of coverlets in a variety of colors and designs. He also enjoyed woodworking and plastic gardening.
- Another of his special loves was big band music. As young adults, he and Audrey enjoyed dancing to the big band sound. He enjoyed listening to and recording the big bands on tape.
- Woodson was a member of the Phi Delta Phi law fraternity. He was a member of the Tennessee Bar Association; he had served as president of the Methodist Men's Club and teacher of the Men's Bible Class, only to mention a few of his activities.
- Woodson and Audrey traveled extensively throughout the world in their later years and thoroughly enjoyed this experience.
- History has always been an important part of Woodson and Audrey's life. They were both active in preserving two Hardeman County sites: The Little court House Museum and the Pillars (both built during the 1820's). They both leave their family and their community with a sense of pride in our heritage and our history.
- A product of the depression, Woodson lived a simple, hardworking but very fulfilling life. He was well-respected among the legal community and by the clients he represented. He was a man of his word...a person you could depend on. He had an uncanny ability to dispense legal advice and common sense at the same time!
- A few weeks ago, at his 91st birthday, he commented... **“the hardest thing about getting old is living a normal life”!**

MAY HE REST IN PEACE!

Written in 2005