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NEWS RELEASE: Mrs. Ann Steger, widow of U.S. District Judge William M. Steger, issues the following comments in regard to Tyler's federal courthouse being renamed in her husband's honor and asks that she not be subjected to additional questioning by the media on Friday. Thank you for respecting her wishes.

Ann Steger said she is overwhelmed by the honor and recognition bestowed on her husband with the naming of the Tyler federal courthouse as the William M. Steger Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

The Stegers enjoyed "an ordinary, simple life" together and never imagined such attention and recognition, she said. Steger served as a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas for more than 35 years, until his death on June 4, 2006.

A ceremony at noon Friday in front of Tyler's federal courthouse will commemorate the official naming of the building in Steger's honor. Several elected officials, friends and family members are expected for the event.

"I'm overwhelmed because everything that might have led to this event were just normal actions in our lives," Mrs. Steger said. "It never occurred to me that it would culminate like this. I just think it's wonderful. It makes me so happy."

Mrs. Steger said her husband was an idealist, who was led and blessed by the Lord during his lifetime.

"He was very humble about what he was doing," she said. "Yes, I'm very proud of him, but it's a pride filled with gratefulness and thanksgiving."

Judge loved the legal profession, believed law was God-inspired because it brings about order in society and enjoyed watching good lawyers practice their craft. And he held them to high standards.

"He thought the practice of law should be filled with principles and integrity, and not just the practice of a livelihood," she said. In his role as judge, Steger would say, "I am the only thing between the citizens and the government."

Mrs. Steger said her husband was happy sitting on the bench in his stately, wood-paneled courtroom in Tyler dispensing justice.

"In the courtroom is where the action is, it's where the law is upheld. It's watching good attorneys represent their clients," she recalled her husband saying. "He spent almost 45 years of his 55-year legal career in that building - in that courtroom."

Some of Steger's memorabilia will be on permanent display in the federal courthouse in downtown Tyler, while many of his papers and other items will be archived at The University of Texas at Tyler.

Although Steger attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas and has the William M. Steger Scholarship Fund which was established in his name at Baylor University, Mrs. Steger said she chose UT-Tyler to house the archives because Tyler has been the couple's home since 1953 "and I just felt like they should be here.

"I picked UT-Tyler because ever since Bill and I moved to Tyler, the people in this city have been very supportive of everything he tried to do," Mrs. Steger said.