

CRENSHAW, DUPREE & MILAM, L.L.P.

The legacy of Crenshaw, Dupree and Milam, L. L. P. began more than one hundred years ago with William Harrison Bledsoe. This attorney and politician was born in Cleburne, Texas on December 23, 1869. He attended the University of Texas briefly and was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1890. He then returned to his hometown to practice law and partner with his brother Albert, but in 1908 an opportunity arose and he traveled to the vast wide-open space of West Texas. This southern tip of the Great American Plains was rapidly emerging as new “fertile ground” for agriculture and ranching. Good, competent lawyers were in short supply, especially in the thriving young South Plains town called Lubbock.

Bledsoe’s first Lubbock work involved a lawsuit pertaining to a herd of cattle. His client was concerned that the cattle would be sold before a contract could be carried out. In order to better understand and appreciate life in West Texas, Bledsoe did something highly unusual, especially by today’s standards. He hired on as a cook so that he could work along side the cowboys as they tended the herd. It was also the perfect way to learn more about his client’s business as well as figure out how to better protect that interest. He soon fell in love with the endless sky of West Texas and the vibrant, growing town of Lubbock. Shortly after settling the case he said “Good-bye” to his old hometown of Cleburne and “Hello” to an exciting and rewarding future on the South Plains.



In the early years Bledsoe worked alone but found time, beginning in 1915, to serve the people of West Texas as a member of the State House of Representatives. He served as chairman of two very important house committees. One investigated Governor James E. Ferguson in 1917 and voted to impeach him. Another moved forward the professionalization of the famed Texas Rangers. After serving two terms in the Texas House, Bledsoe was elected a State Senator in 1919. His grandest accomplishment and the one that would change Lubbock forever involved Senate Bill 103. Bill 103 approved the establishment of Texas Technological College, known today as Texas Tech University. The State Locating Board selected Bledsoe’s new hometown, Lubbock, as the site for the state’s newest college. His work as a Senator, of course, earned him the respect and appreciation of his constituents and colleagues. Bledsoe was considered for higher statewide office but in 1927 he suffered serious injuries in an automobile accident. Consequently, he withdrew from his campaign for reelection and never sought public office again.

In 1926 while still a State Senator, Bledsoe and Charles C. Crenshaw, Sr. became partners and began to build the foundation of what was to soon become one of the largest and most respected law firms on the South Plains. In 1928, Crenshaw’s former law partner George W. Dupree joined the firm and the partnership of Bledsoe, Crenshaw & Dupree was formed. Just prior to Bledsoe’s death in 1936, James H. Milam joined the firm. On January 1, 1940, the firm



Above: William Harrison Bledsoe.

Below: Charles C. Crenshaw, Sr.



took its current name, Crenshaw, Dupree & Milam, which it has retained for more than half a century. Even though Bledsoe's name is no longer used to identify the firm, his pioneer spirit and professional and community leadership is revered and emulated by the partners and associates today.

Under the leadership of James H. Milam, CD&M grew both in size and stature, becoming a preeminent Texas law firm. "Mr. Jim," as he was affectionately called, by both friends and foe, possessed a wit and wisdom that made him a bigger-than-life character. He charmed and challenged most everyone he met. Because of his keen mind and knowledge of the law, icons of the business and political world constantly sought his advice and counsel. In 1991, "Mr. Jim" suggested to then State Senator John Montford the creation of the first Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) structure. His LLP suggestion became not only a Texas reality, but also a model for many states across the nation.

Milam built upon the Bledsoe legacy and the philosophy that the practice of law is a calling of the highest order. A part of the legacy is a commitment to passing down legal knowledge and experience from one CD&M generation to the next. Because of that commitment, CD&M continues to represent major national corporations and institutions, as well as highly respected local and regional individuals, businesses, and institutions.

CD&M is dedicated to creating a culture that takes great pride in its West Texas roots,

rich Lubbock history and the professional accomplishments of its founders. That pride is reflected today in a group of attorneys who not only practice law at the highest level but are also actively involved in their community. With partners and associates serving as volunteers on boards, committees, and many worthwhile projects, CD&M is working to help make Lubbock and West Texas a better place to live and work.

Bledsoe's legacy of service to the great State of Texas continues today with current partner and State Senator Robert Duncan. Senator Duncan is not only respected by those in his own "backyard" but also in Austin and across the state of Texas. Former partner Philip W. Johnson is the first Texas Tech University Law School graduate to serve as a justice on the Supreme Court of Texas. Former partner Robert L. Jones serves as U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Texas and retired partner Joe H. Nagy served as State Bar President in 1987.

What began in 1908 when a young lawyer named Bledsoe came to West Texas and learned about cattle, cowboys and cookin' lives on as one of the region's largest and most respected law firms. With roots running deep in a proud past it seems certain CD&M will continue to flourish in the future in service to its clients and community.

Today, CD&M's twenty attorneys are located at 1500 Broadway in Lubbock, Texas at the Wells Fargo Bank Building, eighth and ninth floors and on the web at www.cdmlaw.com.



Above: George W. Dupree.

Bottom: James H. Milam.