

# Judge Bowie Living Legend in Brandywine

By Harrison P. Hagemeyer Post Reporter

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Judge Alan Bowie, a Prince Georges County lawyer for more than half a century, is a man who has become a local legend in his own lifetime.

Last week, the 73-year-old lawyer-farmer was elected secretary-treasurer of the Prince Georges Bar Association for the fifty-second consecutive year. He has held the position since the association was formed.

Bowie, called "judge" by virtue of his years as a trial magistrate, still actively practices law. Five days a week he leaves his large farm near Brandywine and drives to Upper Marlboro where he maintains his office.

There, lodged behind an old-fashioned roll-top desk, he transacts the business of the day and works on a soon-to-be completed history of the association.

Most of the currently related stories about Bowie stem from his 11 years on the trial magistrate bench, where his explosive decisions sometimes caused defendants to blanch and onlookers to hide smiles.

One old-time county policeman tells of "a youth charged with assault and battery who appeared before Bowie wearing a pin on his cap and asked, "How'm I doing?"

"Not so well," boomed Bowie, "60 days!"

Another anecdote concerns the time Bowie, in sentencing two men for stealing string beans and corn from a field, suggested that farmers break up the practice by emptying a load of "shot" into the thieves.

"Down my way," he said, "we used to load a shotgun with black-eyed peas, and they never came back."

A native of Brandywine, Bowie's formal education consisted of eight years in public school there.

After a stint on his father's farm, he entered the law offices of Stanley and Roberts and "read law" under the direction of Joseph K. Roberts. In 1902, he was admitted to the bar.

That same year the Prince Georges Bar Association was formed and Bowie became a charter member.

A life-long Democrat from a family of Democrats, Bowie was elected State's Attorney in 1923. He served three years and was re-elected in 1930 and 1934.

In those days Bowie was a large man with a luxuriant mustache. Now he is still large, but the mustache is gone and his identifying symbols are hornrimmed glasses and an ever-present cigar.

Bowie was appointed trial magistrate in 1939. He held the post until 1951, when the Republicans, in a landslide election, swept into county offices for the first time in years.

Of his days as trial magistrate, Bowie recalls, "I looked

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upon the court as a place where poor people could go to settle their differences."

"It took more common sense than law."

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Alan Bowie, secretary-treasurer of the Prince Georges Bar Association for 50 years, studies records in his office.