

G. Eugene Boyce

July 12, 1932 - October 28, 2025



Raleigh , North Carolina - Gordon Eugene Boyce, known to friends and colleagues simply as Gene (and to his family "Papa Gene"), passed away peacefully on October 28, 2025, after more than nine decades of an extraordinary, purpose-driven life. A distinguished North Carolina trial lawyer, public servant, and Assistant Chief Counsel to the United States Senate Watergate Committee, Gene Boyce lived by a credo instilled by his father—never, never give up.

Born July 12, 1932, in Clinton, North Carolina, Gene was the son of H. Worth Boyce, a newspaper typesetter and compositor, and Lena Craft Matthews Boyce, a schoolteacher. Raised during the Depression and World War II, he grew up with his brother Worth in Raleigh, where he learned early lessons in perseverance, faith, and public duty. He attended Murphey School and Hugh Morson High, serving as senior-class president, chorus singer, athlete, and member of the award-winning quartet The Harmoniers.

He met his beloved wife of seventy-one years, Patricia (Pat) Brogden Alphin, during high school, and they married in 1954. Together they raised three children, Cathy Boyce Howard, Dan Boyce, and Laura Boyce Isley, each of whom were blessed with their father's quiet tenacity and moral compass.

At Wake Forest College, Gene studied history and mathematics while entering the law program during his senior year under the university's combined arts and law curriculum. He excelled academically while immersing himself in campus life as student body president, head cheerleader (serving alongside Pat) and Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity treasurer. In 1954, he was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa for his outstanding scholarship and character, and he went on to graduate at the top of his class from Wake Forest Law School.

Following graduation and military service with the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG), Gene returned to Raleigh and joined the law firm Fletcher, Lake & Boyce, quickly earning a reputation as one of the state's most principled and meticulous trial attorneys. His early career reflected both compassion and courage: representing small-town clients in difficult cases, advocating for fairness when it was unpopular, and mastering the art of courtroom persuasion that combined intellect with genuine empathy.

Gene's legal path took a historic turn in 1973 when his longtime friend Rufus Edmisten persuaded him to join the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities—the Watergate Committee—chaired by Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina. There, as Assistant Chief Counsel, Gene played a pivotal role in uncovering evidence that led to one of the most consequential constitutional reckonings in American history. His team's discovery of the White House taping system—after a July 13, 1973 interview he conducted—proved to be the critical breakthrough that ultimately brought down a presidency. Equally visionary was his creation of the

first computer database ever used in a Congressional investigation, a technological innovation decades ahead of its time.

After Watergate, Gene continued to serve the public interest, assisting U.S. Senator Robert Morgan on sensitive ethics and judicial matters before returning home to North Carolina. In private practice, he took on the state itself—leading a series of monumental class-action suits challenging unconstitutional taxation of public and federal retirees. The Bailey case, filed on behalf of state and federal retirees, and the Smith/Shaver case, brought on behalf of intangibles taxpayers, resulted in the two largest class action settlements in North Carolina history.

Beyond the courtroom, Gene's generosity reached far into the community. When a grateful client left a charitable bequest, he established the Julia Crump Foundation, which supported scholarships and programs for disadvantaged and disabled children. His civic service extended to church leadership, education boards, and legal organizations across North Carolina. Most notably his enthusiasm for the law is evidenced by his generosity towards his alma mater, Wake Forest University and School of Law, having established several scholarships, as well as the Campbell University School of Law's G. Eugene Boyce Center of Advocacy.

In later years Gene reflected on his life with characteristic humility, crediting every success to the steadfast love of Pat, the encouragement of his children and grandchildren, and the friendships forged through law, politics, and the "Deacon Fishin' Bunch" of fellow lawyers and judges who shared his love of fellowship and sto-

rytelling. To the end, he remained curious, grateful, and resolutely hopeful about the future. Gene unfailingly completed daily crossword puzzles, numerous jigsaw puzzles, and paintings which gave him great pleasure in giving to loved ones.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Pat Boyce; their children Cathy Howard (Buddy), Dan Boyce (Betty), and Laura Isley (Philip); beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren; extended family including the descendants of his late brother Worth Boyce; and countless colleagues and friends whose lives he touched. The family would like to extend their gratitude to Transitions LifeCare and Home Helpers Home Care for their constant and compassionate care.

Gene's extraordinary life and legacy is chronicled in his forthcoming memoir, *Uncovering the Nixon Tapes: Memoir of a North Carolina Attorney and Watergate Assistant Chief Counsel* (co-written by Gene Boyce and Don Rayno), to be published January 22, 2026. The book captures his wit, integrity, and historic work on the Senate Watergate Committee, offering readers a lasting glimpse into the mind and heart of one of North Carolina's finest attorneys.

A celebration of Gene Boyce's life will be held in Raleigh at Hayes Barton Baptist Church, 1800 Glenwood Avenue on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at 11am. The service will be livestreamed at

www.hbbc.org/memorial-services

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to Hayes Barton Baptist Church Television Ministry, 1800 Glenwood Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27608.

Brown-Wynne, 300 Saint Mary's St., Raleigh, NC, is serving the Boyce family.