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The Scoop Blog

George W. Bush causes a stir at George Allen courthouse when called for jury duty



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Being summoned for jury duty at the George L Allen Sr Courts Building in downtown Dallas was anything but dull for Sheri Coleman.

In fact, Coleman and other jurors were in for quite the surprise Wednesday morning when former President George W. Bush also showed up for jury duty at Judge Eric Moye's court on the 14th civil district.

"They made it seem like it was an anonymous juror that never showed up and then they brought him in," she said.

Coleman, of Dallas, said Bush spent time talking to the other jurors and took photos and spoke with everyone. She said the president's visit was "awesome" and "surprising."

"He was very personable, very friendly, just 'hey I'm here to serve,' he asked questions and was very nice," she said. "I loved it."

Bush's spokesman Freddy Ford confirmed the president was summoned for jury duty and said Bush was at the courthouse in the 600 block of Commerce Street from about 8:50 a.m. until just before noon.

Secret service could be seen outside Moye's court on the 5th floor of the courthouse.

Moye said he found out this morning that the former president had been assigned to his courtroom and said having Bush in his courtroom was "quite an experience."

“It would be great if everyone took their jury service the same way [Bush] did,” he said. “He understood it was important, he took it in good nature and he was engaged and talked to the lawyers.”

Moye said the reason Bush wasn’t selected as a juror wasn’t because of his high-profile nature, but simply because the positions had already been filled.

“He was number 27 of a 35 member panel and we only got through number 23,” he said.

Moye said he hopes future potential jurors will follow Bush’s lead of showing up for jury duty.

“One of the remarks I made to jury was all of you have some reason why you have to do something else,” he said. “But take a look over and see you have the former president who has given his time to be here, so think how good your excuses for getting out of here really are.”

Moye said Bush was “incredibly gracious” to all of the court staff and took photos with bailiffs, clerks and even the summer interns.

“He made sure it was a wonderful experience,” he said.

Joel Ehambe, another potential juror, said he sat just in front of the former president.

“I turned around and he was seated right behind me and I said, “I think I know that guy,” he said. “Then the judge introduced him and said it was an honor to have the former president of the United States in the court.”

Ehambe said he was nervous at first to be in the same room as the former president, but Bush helped put everyone at ease.

“He was laughing and talking and it helped ease the tension,” he said.

Ehambe said he took photos with the former president and spoke with him for a few minutes.

“I said it was an honor to meet him and I thanked him for being there,” he said. “He thanked me as well.”