

## **Colonel Benjamin K. Blackburn, Jr. (Class 56-43)**

Colonel Blackburn was born on August 13, 1922 in Baltimore, Maryland. He graduated with honors from City College in 1939. Following graduation, he went to work for the News Post, now the News American, as a copy boy. In 1941, he left the newspaper and joined the Army. At the age of 21, he was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant upon graduation from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He served there as a gunnery instructor throughout World War II. He retired as colonel in the United States Army Reserve.

Immediately after the war, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he received a bachelor's degree in English within two years. After graduation, he returned to Baltimore and the News American, working in various editorial capacities. While working full-time at the newspaper, he studied law at the University of Maryland, from which he graduated and received the Order of the Coif honor in 1951. Later that year, he opened a part-time law practice in a downtown office with William W. Mahoney, where he worked until he joined the NLRB.

He was an administrative law judge for the National Labor Relations Board. In his role with the NLRB, he heard labor disputes between companies and unions throughout the United States. He joined the board in 1958 as a field attorney in the organization's Chicago office. He transferred to the Baltimore regional office in 1960, where he became a senior trial attorney. Eight years later, he moved to the NLRB's Washington office as a trial examiner, later becoming an administrative law judge.

Colonel Blackburn was known among his colleagues as a prodigious worker who wrote scholarly decisions. One of his many decisions involved the Pilot Freight Carriers, Inc., case, in which the company and union disputed the status of supervisory personnel. His ruling in favor of the company subsequently was upheld by the Supreme Court.

