

Otto R.T. Bowden Sr.

(1915-2011)

*Inductee into the Labor and Employment Law Section Hall of Fame
June 2013*

Otto Roy Thomas Bowden, Sr., graduated from Robert E. Lee Senior High School. Law school was interrupted when he was recruited by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1941. He served in the FBI Foreign Service for most of World War II that included one period when he was assistant to the American Consul in Puerto Alegre, Brazil. In addition to this assignment, his mission took him to various other countries.

After his resignation from the FBI, Otto returned to practice law in Jacksonville and was appointed Assistant County Solicitor under Wayne Ripley. He ran unsuccessfully for Mayor in 1947. Otto practiced law in Jacksonville for many years. He was admitted to the Bar in 1940 and was recognized nationally as an authority in management-side Labor Relations, arguing numerous cases before both agencies and courts. He was an original partner in the firm of Hamilton and Bowden until the firm was merged in 1981 as Haynsworth, Baldwin, Miles and Bowden with offices in four southern states. Bowden's national client base for labor relations included the Winn Dixie Corporation, Coca Cola Foods Division (Minute Maid and Hi-C), Flowers Bakery, Florida Steel Corporation, and many more.

Otto was a member of the American and Florida Bar Associations. He was admitted before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and admitted and qualified as Attorney and Counselor of the Supreme Court of the United States, where he successfully argued several cases. He served as a Director of Goodwill Industries. He was on the Board of Visitors Juvenile Court and was a member of the Kiwanis Club, Propeller Club and was twice elected President of the Little Theatre of Jacksonville. He was captain of the Quarterback Club in 1968. He was a life member of the Florida Yacht Club and was a charter member of the University and River Clubs. For his long service as Director of the Florida Chamber of Commerce, he was elected a Director Emeritus in 1988.

Otto was a life member of Duval Lodge, York Rite Bodies, Morocco Temple, the Jester's Court No. 90, Ye Mystic Revellers, Navy League, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Military Order of the Stars and Bars and a former board member of the Museum of Southern History. He was a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and of the Ex-Agents of the FBI. Otto was a founder of the Sports Car Club of Jacksonville which later became associated with the Sports Car Club of America. He was an aviator and owner of several airplanes that he flew for business and pleasure for over twenty years. Otto was a recognized authority on Ferrari automobiles and devoted a great portion of his time to the marque. He owned many of the most desirable Ferraris from the early 1950's until his death. His last car interest was with Bugatti cars. His Type 40 was well known in the country through his membership in the American Bugatti Club.