

# Arthur H. Snow

(1841-1915)

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The following profile of Arthur H. Snow appeared in a history of Winona County published in 1913. It lists events in his life, from his birth in 1841 right down to the year of publication. It does not mention his success in private practice, knowledge of the law, or work ethic. Also missing is any hint of the personal drama behind his election to the district court in 1896. Ozro B. Gould, with whom Snow had practiced since 1877, was appointed to the district court by Governor Clough in 1895, ran in the November 1896 election, but was beaten handily by Snow, his former partner.<sup>1</sup> We can assume that the following sketch, modest and incomplete, was written by Judge Snow himself.

Arthur H. Snow, jurist, was born in Clinton, Mich., September 20, 1841, and there attended the district schools. He graduated from the literary course at the University of Michigan in 1865, and then entered the law office of G. V. N. Lothrop, Detroit, a former ambassador to Russia. Later he studied law at the Albany Law School, Albany, N. Y., graduating in June, 1867, in the same class with William McKinley, afterward president of the United States. Mr. Snow was admitted to the bar in New York, and then returned to Michigan, where he was married August 28, 1867, to Martha A. Wescott, of Homer, in that state. November 1 of that year he left with his bride for San Francisco, making the journey by the so-called Nicaragua Route. He practiced law in San Francisco until the close of 1870. In January, 1871, he came to Winona and engaged in the practice of law with his uncle, John Keyes, who had an office at the corner of Second and Lafayette streets. Mr. Keyes

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<sup>1</sup> The results of the election on November 3, 1896, were:

Arthur H. Snow.....8,549  
Ozro B. Gould.....5,438

1897 *Blue Book*, at 492. At that time the Third Judicial District included the counties of Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona. Snow carried each county. For the bar memorial to Gould, see “Ozro B. Gould (1841-1907)” (MLHP, 2011).

died in December, 1876, and Mr. Snow became a partner of O. B. Gould, this partnership continuing for eighteen years. Then O. B. Gould was elected to the bench of the court of the Third Minnesota Judicial District to succeed Judge C. M. Start, who had been elevated to supreme bench. Then Mr. Snow continued practice alone until 1896. He was county attorney from 1875 to 1879; he was city attorney for three terms and drafted the charter which, with amendments, is still in force in Winona; he was mayor in 1885 and 1886; he was president of the board of education for a considerable period, and a member of the state board of bar examiners for a time. In 1896 he was elected judge of the Third Minnesota Judicial District. Since then he has continued on the bench and in that period has heard over a thousand cases. His residence is at 427 West Sanborn street, where he has lived since May 1, 1877. Mr. Snow has two living children, Harold and Clinton, who are engaged in the dairying business at Scanlon, Carlton county, Minn.<sup>2</sup>

When Judge Snow wrote this profile, he was suffering from cancer. Given the state of oncology at the time, little could be done for him. He experienced a long and painful decline, succumbing on the morning of Saturday, May 14, 1915.

An obituary in the Sunday edition of *The Winona Independent* revealed more of the man than he had permitted in his self-portrait two years earlier. He seems to have had an elevated devotion to his work as a jurist. In his chambers, in pain, he dictated a decision in a case less than four days before dying. Knowing the end was imminent, he found relief the law.

That obituary follows. It has been reformatted. A photo of Judge Snow has been eliminated. In the original article, "Judge Snow's Farewell to Friends" appeared in as an insert with heavy borders. It now appears at the end of that newspaper article.

Six months later, the Wabash County Bar passed a "Memorial Tribute" to Judge Snow. That resolution concludes this post.

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<sup>2</sup> Franklyn-Curtiss Wedge & William Jay Whipple, I *The History of Winona County, Minnesota* 294-5 (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1913).

# THE WINONA INDEPENDENT

Sunday, May 16, 1915

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## Judge Snow Finally Overcome by Malady After Patient Suffering of Four Years

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VENERABLE WINONA JURIST  
SUCCUMBS SATURDAY  
CLOSING REMARK-  
ABLE CAREER

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ON BENCH ALTHOUGH HE  
HAD ARRANGED FOR  
RETIREMENT ON  
JUNE 1ST

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A malady which he valiantly combated for four years yesterday morning finally overcame Judge Arthur A. H. Snow. The venerable jurist, unconscious for twenty hours, slept into death after an extremely painful illness. Cancer was the cause of death which occurred at 9:25 a.m. Except to members of the immediate family, the end was entirely unexpected and the announcement caused deep sorrow throughout the city, the county, the district and the state, for he was widely known.

### A Lovable Character.

Judge Snow was a student of human nature. He knew his fellow men and that asset in his composite make-up drew to him his greatest number of warm friends. As a jurist he was keen and stern, yet he never overlooked the human aspect of any case brought into his court. The dignity of his high office appealed to him in every moment of his life. Among attorneys

who practiced in his court, Judge Snow was accepted as a model for emulation. He was considerate and efficient. The procedure which prevailed in his courtroom was exemplary and frequently was the subject of comment on the part of strangers.

#### A Patient Sufferer.

About four years ago Judge Snow's illness first made itself evident but it was nearly a year later before his closest friends knew he had been in pain. At that time he went to Rochester, there to undergo an operation. It brought him temporary relief and he returned encouraged with the promise that surgery had given him. The disease could not be stayed, however, and gradually it again crept upon him with greater violence. On the advice of friends last summer, Judge Snow went to Baltimore to have radium treatment. He was in that city for a number of weeks, but the cure he hoped there to find was not available.

He returned home and again resumed his duties on the bench. His ailment steadily and slowly became more aggravated but his determination would not permit his relinquishment the work he loved most.

#### Remains at His Post.

Although he knew full well that rest might mitigate his suffering, Judge Snow declined to leave the office he so long had held with marked success. Daily he came to his office and until a few weeks ago remained on the bench. Then, his condition weakened physically but his mind still keen in spite of the burden placing upon him by the disease, he found it necessary to call in assistance. Judge Albert Johnson of Red Wing took his place on the bench when court convened in the April term in Winona. But all the time, the Winona jurist was at his office pondering over the legal questions before him. A week ago yesterday he realized that it would be impossible to make the trip to open court at Wabasha and Judge Johnson was asked to assist him there, also.

A note, pathetic in its expressions to friends, was dictated and taken to Wabasha where it was read to his associates of many years.

### He Made No Complaint.

Judge Snow during his long period of illness was ever considerate of those with whom he associated. Never to any of them did he complain. He accepted the affliction which developed slowly without advising those about him of its progress.

“I have had over sixty years of good health,” said Judge Snow recently, “and now in this time of sickness I should make no complaint. If all men were as fortunate as I have been, they too would feel as I do.”

It was Judge Snow’s greatest pleasure to work in his office and over legal matters. He knew the law and attorneys always accepted his rulings on points raised during the progress of trials as final for he knew the law immediately. During his eighteen years on the bench he had few vacations for he preferred to remain close to his chosen field.

### Retirement June 1.

Judge Snow was to have retired on June 1. His resignation was tendered to Governor Hammond on April 20, last, and promptly accepted. He was to have taken advantage of the judicial retirement act.

Early last week the venerable jurist began to sink rapidly. But he was at his office as late as Wednesday when he gave considerable time to legal matters before him. He dictated a decision to a stenographer while he was at the office between 4 and 6 p. m.

Thursday morning one of Judge Snow’s last acts was to dictate a congratulatory letter to George W. Granger, the day before appointed as successor on the district bench here.

### Within Same Week.

Within the same week, two of the judges of the Third judicial district died in Winona. On Saturday night, May 8, Judge Lloyd Barber succumbed after a stroke of paralysis. He was the second judge in the district and Judge Snow was the eighth.

### Services on Tuesday.

The services will be conducted on Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at St. Paul's Episcopal church. The rector, the Rev. George S. Keller, will have charge. The family as requested that there be no flowers. Interment will be made in Woodlawn cemetery.

Information received last night was to the effect that a large number of attorneys of both Wabasha and Olmsted counties will be here for the service. Both Judge Johnson of Red Wing and George W. Granger of Rochester will probably be here.

The Winona County Bar association, it is understood, will meet tomorrow to arrange for paying a tribute to the memory of Judge Snow and also for attending the services.

### Widow and Two Sons.

A widow and two sons, Clinton of Winona and H. F. Snow of Keatwood, La., survive.

Last evening messages of condolence began to reach the members of the bereaved family. From all over the state and Northwest last night were received messages of inquiry relative to the funeral arrangements.

### Born in Michigan.

Judge Snow was born at Clinton, Mich., a small village in the southern part of that state, Sept. 20, 1841. He received his early training there in the grade schools. He left the home of his parents to attend the University of Michigan, at Ann

Arbor, from which institution he was graduated in the literary course in 1865.

#### Begins Law Career.

It was in the law office of G. V. N. Lothrop, at Detroit, that he began his career as a lawyer. Mr. Lathrop was a former ambassador to Russia and it was under the tutorage of this eminent jurist that he received his first practical insight as an attorney. After one year with this office in Detroit, Mr. Snow went to Albany, N. Y., where he attended the Albany Law School and was graduated in the June class, 1867. While attending this institution, Mr. Snow was a classmate of William McKinley, who later became president of the United States. The two were graduated in the same class.

#### Returns to Detroit.

After completing his education, the Youngman returned to Detroit, having been admitted to the bar in New York state. He remained in Detroit only a few weeks and on Aug. 28, 1867, he was married to Miss Martha A. Westcott, of Homer, Mich.

On Nov. 1, 1867, with his bride, he left for San Francisco byway of Nicaragua. Three days were required in crossing the isthmus and four-teen miles were covered by mule team. At San Francisco, he began the practice of law, remaining there until Jan. 5, 1871.

#### With His Uncle Here.

The young lawyer was induced to come to Winona by his uncle, John Keyes, an attorney practicing in this city. He arrived and entered into as partnership with Mr. Keyes in an office at the corner of Second and Lafayette streets. In December, 1876, Mr. Snow's partner died and early in the year 1877 Mr. Snow became the law partner of O. B. Gould, a leading lawyer of the city. The partnership continued and was successful for eighteen years until Mr. Gould was appointed judge of the District Court, succeeding Judge Start, who was

elevated to the supreme bench. During the period of the existence of these law partnerships, Mr. Snow served as county attorney from 1875 to 1879, was city attorney for three consecutive terms and served as mayor of Winona from 1885 to 1886, at the same time being a member and president of the Board of Education. Finally before he was elected to the district judgeship, Attorney Snow was a member of the State Board of Examiners of Law.

In 1896, he was elected to the District court and presided on the bench for the first time in 1897 and since that time had held that important position. During his judgeship, he estimated that he had heard more than twelve hundred different actions.

#### Same House Many Years.

On May 1, 1877, he purchased the home at 427 West Sanborn street, and entered it as his home. At that time, it was considered a suburban residence—almost out of town. The city has been built up about his home while he has continued for thirty-five years to live there.

Judge Snow recently recalled that when he came here, the store of H. Choate & Co., was located on Second street and there were many other business houses which made early history for Winona. Prominent among them was the R. D. Cone, establishment. At that time, in 1870, the official census of Winona was 7,125. When he arrived here, Judge Thomas Wilson occupied offices in the same building. In 1873, Mr. Snow moved into what was then the new post office building at the corner of Center and Third streets. In 1883, the firm with which Mr. Snow was affiliated, moved into the Slade block at the corner of Third and Main streets.

#### Drafted City Charter.

Judge Snow, while city attorney, drafted the present city charter, which has been amended from time to time but which has served its purpose so well for many years.



On the La Crosse, Trempealeau & Prescott line, twelve days after it began the operation of trains, Judge Snow first found his way into this city. It was the first railroad to operate in this section. The station was across the river in Wisconsin and the young man was compelled to walk into Winona across the river on the ice.

#### JUDGE SNOW'S FAREWELL TO FRIENDS

A WEEK AGO YESTERDAY Judge Snow, at his chamber at the court house, dictated a letter of farewell to his friends in the court at Wabasha, where the term opened on Monday. It was the first time in eighteen years that court there convened without the presence of Judge Snow. The letter indicated clearly that the venerable jurist realized the end was approaching although he revealed no signs of weakening in his fight against the malady. The letter addressed to Frank C. Goss, clerk of court, follows:

I have been thinking and hoping that I might feel well enough to go to Wabasha next Monday to attend the opening of the term and to greet all my friends there, both professional and others, but as I feel today I think it would be no pleasure to you and certainly no physical pleasure to myself to make the trip. Am in pain most of the time. Occasionally it is so severe as to be almost unbearable. Please tell the gentlemen who might be interested in hearing it what the content of this letter are, and say that I regret more deeply than I can express the circumstances which make it unavoidable for me to part company with them so far as official association is concerned and also so far as the friendly association, which have been of equal strength, are concerned.

It might happen that between now and the first of June I maybe able to make the rip which I proposed for next Monday but this is extremely doubtful.

Judge Snow planned to visit Rochester tomorrow to bid his friends goodbye.

*The Winona Independent* carried the following editorial about Judge Snow on Tuesday, May 18, 1915:

# THE WINONA INDEPENDENT

Tuesday, May 18, 1915

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## JUDGE ARTHUR H. SNOW

To its last resting place today the body of the late Judge Arthur H. Snow will be conveyed.

What was mortal of that good man, who suffered silently that his friends might not suffer with him, will be laid in the close embrace of mother earth: but the memory of his exemplary life and good works will live long, and the love of him will flourish many years in the hearts of men.

Seldom along the pathway of life does one meet a man who so appropriately occupied the station in life that his fellow men had chosen for him as did Judge Arthur H. Snow. Strong in mentality he was, keen to grasp the salient points and hold fast to that which was good. Stern he was when severity was needed, but those who knew him and those who studied him early discovered that Judge Snow's predominant trait was the love of humanity. He was courteous to and considerate of men and women in all stations of life. Wealth and surface refinements found no greater favor in the discerning eye of Judge Snow than poverty and the most rugged simplicity of character. He had the faculty of reaching fundamentals not only in legal problems but in men and women. Thus it is that he was universally loved and respected. Thus it was that his judicial opinions took high rank.

Winona citizens will today stand reverently about the body of Judge Arthur H. Snow, not only as a mark of respect to his memory, as men who are wont to show in the presence of the dead, but as a token of sincere respect and veneration for the work of character building achieved by a great and good man.

To his immediate family and those most intimately associated with him who will lose the kindly ministrations prompted by his love and courtesy, the sympathy of this community is most feelingly extended.

Six months later, the Wabasha County Bar passed the following resolution:

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO  
HON. ARTHUR H. SNOW,  
ADOPTED BY THE WABASHA COUNTY BAR.

At a regular term of the District Court of Wabasha County, Minnesota, held Monday, November 15, 1915, Hon. George L Granger, presiding, memorial exercises were had in memory of Judge Arthur H. Snow, and the following memorial tribute was adopted and upon request of the members of the bar was directed to be recorded in this court and made a part of its records.

RESOLUTIONS UPON THE DEATH OF  
HON. ARTHUR H. SNOW, DECEASED.

WHEREAS, at the close of a long life, filled with service to his fellow men and crowned with honor, the Supreme Judge of the Universe has seen fit to remove from us Arthur H. Snow, who for the past eighteen years has ably filled the office of Judge of the District Court for the Third Judicial District of the State of Minnesota.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BAR OF WABASHA COUNTY, that we are deeply sensible of the lose that not we, but all the citizens of this county, have sustained in his death.

During the years that he has presided over this court, we have ever found him a just and upright judge, impartial, fearless, yet kindly and sympathetic.

We have recognized in him a student of unusual attainments, a lawyer of ripened experiences, a judge distinguished by his

accurate knowledge of the law and familiarity with the precedents, yet withal, possessing a mind of such breadth and vigor that in his judgments he never suffered equity and justice to be fettered by the dusty decrees of the past

He has been to us an example, an inspiration, a guide, a friend.

The administration of law in this County has been dignified and enobled by his years of service in our midst.

He went to his long rest bearing with him the love of all who knew him,

Let a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of this court and a certified copy thereof be by the clerk of this court transmitted to the widow of our departed friend,

THE BAR OF WABASHA COUNTY.<sup>3</sup>

At the annual convention of the Minnesota State Bar Association in 1915, the Committee on Legal Biography presented the following memorial to Snow:<sup>4</sup>

#### ARTHUR HERBERT SNOW.

Arthur Herbert Snow, at the time of his demise judge of the Third Judicial District, died at Winona, May 15th, 1915. He surrendered to a malady which he had combated for four years.

At the time of his death Judge Snow had completed three complete terms as district judge and had entered upon his fourth term, so that his service was for eighteen years and four months, being the longest of any judge of his District. To the roll of distinguished names of jurists presiding in the Third District, which includes such names as Thomas Wilson, Lloyd Barber, William Mitchell, Charles M. Start and O. B. Gould, is added that of Arthur H. Snow. As a jurist he easily

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<sup>3</sup> On file at the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings, Minnesota State Bar Association* 215 (1915).

maintained the reputation of the bench of the Third District as one occupied by men of ability, judicial capacity and sound legal learning and his record is a distinctive expression of his ability as a jurist and a scholar of the law. During his years of service he presided at the trial of over one thousand cases and although appeals were taken from his decisions they were very few in number compared with the numerous decisions which he made and his rulings were sustained by the Supreme Court in a proportion which stamped him as one of the ablest trial judges in the state.

Arthur H. Snow was born in Clinton, Michigan, September 20th, 1841, and he was, therefore, of the age of seventy-three years and five months at the time of his death. His boyhood was spent in his home village, where he acquired his early education. He was graduated from the literary department of the University of Michigan in 1865, and subsequently from the Albany Law School, at Albany, N. Y., in 1867. Before entering the law school, Judge Snow spent a year in the law office of the late George V. N. Lothrop, at Detroit, Michigan. Mr. Lothrop was a diplomatist and a lawyer of much experience. After being admitted to practice Judge Snow returned to Detroit, and in 1867 married Miss Martha A. Westcott, then of Homer, Michigan, who was his constant life companion and who survives him.

With his bride he left for San Francisco, where he located and practiced for nearly four years. Early in 1871 he came to Winona and formed a partnership with his uncle, the late John Keyes. This continued until his uncle died, and in 1877 Judge Snow and the late O. B. Gould united their efforts, which partnership was successfully continued for eighteen years, or until 1895, when Mr. Gould was appointed judge of the District Court. During his years of practice Judge Snow had served for six years as city attorney, for four years as county attorney, and for two years as mayor of the city of Winona and as a member and president of the Board of Education. His public service was marked by an earnest desire to serve the people and to faithfully perform his duties.

In the fall of 1896 Judge Snow was elected district judge, succeeding Judge Gould, and ascended the bench in January, 1897, to which position he was in succession re-elected for his fourth term. During his last two candidacies he had no opposition.

He served for many years as president of the local bar association and for some time as a member of the State Board of Law Examiners and was at one time Democratic candidate for associate justice of the Supreme Court of Minnesota.

During the past few years of service upon the bench Judge Snow suffered increasing pain from his malady. He steadfastly and with determination, however, continued to perform the many duties of his office and succeeded remarkably well in clearing up his work, and his death left very few matters undecided.

He was distinctly a jurist and enjoyed to the utmost the work imposed upon him. He spent many hours at his desk in immediate reach of his law books, carefully, and with minute detail, studying the facts submitted to him and making his decisions. These he usually wrote himself, with pen and ink, regardless of their length, and he never filed a decision until satisfied in every respect that he had correctly decided the matter according to the law and the evidence and that through his decision substantial justice between the parties had been done. In criminal matters he tempered justice with mercy, having in mind his duty to the community and expressing humanity to the accused. Neither bias nor partisanship entered into his decisions, and the care which he exercised and the knowledge of law which he brought to mind earned for him the respect and approval of the bar and the commendation of the higher court.

He was gentle in manner, exceedingly patient, but quick to rebuke wrong methods, and to protect the rights of the weak and those who might be incompetently represented, loving his library, and with a high regard for the virtues which make to elevate life. His religious affiliation was with the Episcopal

Church. His home life was a most happy one and home had a great attraction for him. He was the father of seven sons, three dying in infancy and two in early manhood.

By his death the bench of the state loses a most able and experienced jurist, and the bar of the district, as well as of the state, one who was, indeed, a friend at court. Although called from a task which his constituents had freely and gladly placed upon him before they had expressed any thought that his work was done, nevertheless he had already done more and better work than most men do. By his works we shall remember him.

His funeral was held from St Paul's church, Winona, being conducted by Rev. George S. Keller. It was attended by Federal Judge Booth, District Judges Johnson and Granger, nearly all the members of the bar of the three counties comprising the district, and representative lawyers from other parts of the state and many county officials of the district.

The Winona County bar held a memorial service, at which time a memorial similar to the above was adopted and spread upon the records of the court. A committee consisting of Herbert M. Bierce, Robert E. Looby and J. M. George had charge of the service. Judge George W. Granger presided and closed the service with a feeling expression of his very high regard for the work and life of his predecessor. ■



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and February 17, 2012..