

Memorial Services

For

Charles G. Bowdish
(1870 – 1922)

Eighth Judicial District
McLeod County Courthouse
Glencoe, Minnesota
May 8, 1922

MEMORIAL SERVICES *

**Fred V. Brown,
Robert H. McClelland,
Charles G. Hinds,
Charles G. Bowdish.**

At the opening of the May 1922 General Term of said Court held at Glencoe, McLeod County, Monday, May Eighth, 1922, at 1:30 P.M., the Honorable Cyril M. Tift, Judge presiding, MEMORIAL SERVICES were held in honor of the late Judge Fred W. Brown, Robert H. McClelland, Charles G. Hinds, and Charles G. Bowdish. Notice of said Memorial Services having been previously given to the Members of the Bar as follows: -

**Chambers of Cyril M. Tift.
Eighth Judicial District
Glencoe, Minnesota.**

March 25, 1922.

Memorial Services in honor of the late Judge Fred V. Brown, R. H. McClelland, Charles G. Hinds and Charles G. Bowdish will be held at Glencoe on Monday May 8th 1922 at the hour of 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon.

The following committees have been and are hereby appointed to submit suitable Memorials for the occasion:

....

**In honor of Charles G. Bowdish –
Sam G. Anderson,
P. W. Morrison,
W. H. Southworth,
Thomas Hessian,
C. H. McKenzie, and
Joseph J. Moriarity.**

*** MLHP: Memorials to Judge Brown, Robert McClelland, and Charles Hinds are missing from the transcript filed at the Minnesota Historical Society. The remaining tribute to Charles Bowdish has been reformatted and several typographical errors corrected. Though the memorial services were held in McLeod County, "County of Sibley" was handwritten in the caption.**

Brief testimonials of appreciation by any Member of the Bar will also be welcomed.

Very sincerely,
C. M. Tift, Judge.

Thereupon the following proceedings were had:

....

CHARLES G. BOWDISH.

MR. ANDERSON. May it please the Court: the members of the bar of the Eighth Judicial District meet today to pay their tribute or respect to the late Charles G. Bowdish, who, for nearly eighteen years served as the court reporter of the District.

Mr. Bowdish entered upon the performance of his duties as a complete stranger to most of us but his uniform good nature, his unceasing devotion to duty and his constant desire reserve and to serve well, early won and ever retained the profound respect and friendship of all with whom he came in contact in his official capacity.

Great hearted, loyal and faithful, his official duties were ever characterized by cheerfulness, eager willingness, and maximum efficiency. No public servant ever strove more earnestly and effectively to do his whole part. His example was an inspiration, his fellowship delightful and his friendship a precious treasure. His faithful devotion to duty remained with him to the end. During the last three months of his life, ever conscious that the grim reaper was close at hand, he raced with death and undoubtedly hastened the end in his courageous effort to transcribe all his notes that when the Final Summons came there might be no unfinished work upon his desk. No soldier ever fought a gamer fight, no warrior ever faced death more calmly, and when his great spirit took flight, there was life upon his kindly face the smile that reflected the sweetness and charity that had endeared him to all who knew him.

In his death our District has lost one off its best citizen, our Court one of its most efficient and valuable public officers, our profession one of its most devoted friends and his family a profoundly kind and affectionate husband and father.

Cut down in the midst of his usefulness and at the period in life when his powers at the maximum, we deeply mourn his loss and extend our sincere sympathy to his wife and children in their bereavement.

We respectfully request that the foregoing memorial be entered upon the records of this court and that a copy thereof be forwarded to the family of our departed friend and associate.

Dated May 8th, 1922.

(signed)

W. H. Southworth

P. W. Morrison

Sam G. Anderson,

Committee

MR ANDERSON. Your Honor, two communications were sent in by attorneys of the district, who are unable to be present today. With the request that they be read and made a part of these proceedings. I will read them.

One is from Mr. Ora J. Parker of Le Sueur.

La Sueur, Minnesota, March 30th, 1922.

Honorable C. M. Tift, My dear Judge,

I cannot well attend the memorial meeting but I ask that you will read or have read the following true expression of my sentiment toward the memory of Mr. Bowdish.

CHARLES G. BOWDISH.

That never-ending miracle, the recurrent Springtime, is spreading its mantle of green over the land where, prone in the sleep that know no waking this side of the veil, my friend, Charles G. Bowdish, lies, pulseless and still. How richly he lived, my friend, what time the River of Life courses through his genial frame! His light, playful intelligent fancy played over the landscape of life as the sun of May time illumines the land. He was a philosopher, a poet, a writer, a dreamer, and, yet, he lived the life of the world, a man among men, warm, hearty, friendly, human, and never can I forget him, the man whom we all now and loved so well.

He shall sleep soundly in his narrow home, joined there in the awful Democracy of Death, with countless millions that have gone before, but the sunset radiance and glow that lingers on the horizons of our memories concerning him shall ever show, in their unfading hues, how true and fond and lasting was the impression his personality made upon us. The slowly-moving aeons of time shall mingle his dust with the dust of the great and the humble that sleep within Earth's hospitable bosom, but his memory shall never die within us while Reason sits upon her throne.

(Signed, Ora J. Parker.)

MR. ANDERSON. Also a letter from Mr. E. W. Komarek, who is unable to be here. –

“May it please the Court: - The passing away of our friend Charles G. Bowdish, again impresses us with the fickleness of this life's tenure. Little did I expect when I last saw my friend, Mr. Bowdish, that he would be soon called to his reward in the Great Beyond. He gave promise of many more years among us. To me the sad news

of his death was certainly unexpected. For over sixteen years, continuously, and until he passed away he was a faithful, accurate, dependable, accommodating and reliable reporter of this Court, and soon won the friendship, respect, confidence, and trust of the members of the bar of this District, and of others who had any business with him. The more the members of the bar knew of him the more they liked him and the more they were impressed with his ability and his worth.

There was a vein of humor running through his nature which made his companionship always entertaining. When attending court I never saw him in any mood except the happiest, and his good humor seemed always present. He was an entertaining conversationalist, for he knew how to mix philosophy and humor in telling proportions. His happy moods were infectious, and his companionship was a very antidote to dullness and despondency.

He was a man of wide and varied experience, which gave him a broader view of life, of human nature and better qualified him for his exacting duties. We miss him as an officer of this Court. We mourn him as a friend.”

MR. ANDERSON. I, personally, experienced the keenest regret when I heard of the death of my good friend, Mr. Bowdish. I think there was no one who knew him much better than I during the eighteen years he served this district. The outstanding characteristic of Mr. Bowdish, the characteristic that impressed one more than any other, was his deep and profound sense of service. His example of living is an inspiration to all of us who knew him. I am glad we have held this Memorial this afternoon. He deserved it. A kinder, sweeter soul never lived. The last time I saw him, I think it was the first part of December at the close of our last term. I was satisfied that I would never see him again, and I know that he was satisfied that the end was close at hand, but he bid his associates good-bye as if he expected to return in the usual course. He left us with the courage which marked him as a real man.

JUDGE MORRISON. –

May it Please the Court: - We convene here today for the purpose of paying our respects to the memory of those who have been called to their Eternal Reward, among whom is Charles G. Bowdish, the late Reporter of this District.

As has been said by an eminent jurist of this state, we do not have these ceremonies for the benefit of the laymen, but really for the purpose of awakening a desire for emulation in those here to nobler action.

It is a sad mission for me here today to express my sympathies and memorial of the man whom I have known so well.

Charles G. Bowdish died at the age of fifty two years, at the zenith of his power and service to the community. I have in my possession over his own signature a brief statement of the history of his life. Among other things in things in this letter, he states:

“Like yourself, I was born a poor boy, my mother died when I was four, my father when I was fifteen, and, aside from the pittance of \$250 I got as my share of his life insurance, I have earned every dollar I have had since that early day. I supported myself and graduated from the Chatfield high school. Taught for one year, and then took as much of a university course as I could without running into debt, years 1889 and 1890. I came to Shakopee as principal of the schools, which position I held for three years and then got stranded for seven years and a half. As Editor and manager of the “Scott County Argus” I felt I was not living up to my capacity for work, but with a family on my hands I was obliged to look before I leaped – in 1898 I was obliged to sit with my first born boy, who was at death’s door from malnutrition from November to March every night from eight until four in the morning. During that time I studied shorthand and became a rapid writer. I have taught two classes since, and several private pupils, thus further grounding myself in the art. I mention the circumstances of learning the science of shorthand at night as a sort of parallel to the case of one of the best stenographic reporters now in Minneapolis, who learned shorthand during a confinement of six months in the county jail. I wished to be ready should opportunity knock at my door. I feel now that the opportunity has come and I stand ready if the happy choice comes to me.”

That letter further continued the provision that in the event some other reporter should be selected then he wanted an opportunity to be heard, which shows that he didn’t want to usurp the rights of anyone else. That letter was dated November 14, 1904, and on the 15th day of November, 1904, I received a communication from Mr. Eli Southworth, who lives at Shakopee, one of the oldest practitioners in this district with the possible exception of Judge Cadwell, who formerly was a judge of this district, and, I think, next comes Mr. Southworth, and then Mr. Odell, who is present here today. In that communication, Mr. Southworth said of Mr. Bowdish: -

“I understand there is to be a change in the office of Court Reporter. If such is the case I hope you will not consider it presumptuous on my part to ask your consideration of Mr. Charles C. Bowdish of this place, who, I have been told, has made an application for the place if a change is determined upon. I have known Mr. Bowdish for many years and have had occasion to dictate to him and know him to be accurate and rapid as a stenographer and very expert as a typewriter. Besides these qualities he possesses the further very essential element in a reporter of being strictly conscientious and careful in doing everything entrusted to him in the best possible manner. And, I know that if he is appointed he will be found honest, faithful, and competent in all his work and start out with the confidence of all the attorneys who know him and soon earn the confidence of all others.”

At that time, may it please the Court, I only knew Mr. Bowdish casually; I knew nothing of his qualifications; I knew of course the occupation in which he was engaged, and outside of that, I was ignorant, but I took the word of Mr. Southworth, knowing him as I did to be an honest, conscientious, upright man, who wouldn’t make any false representation, and so on the evening before Christmas night, 1904, I made an order appointing him Court Reporter of this district. He has served as

Court Reporter of this district while I was Judge of this Court for twelve long years, and after I was retired he was re-appointed by Your Honor upon the Bench, and served up to the time he died.

Now the Memorial which has been presented by my friend, Mr. Anderson, expresses all or nearly all the sentiments which we all have and would be willing to express if the opportunity afforded. I can say nothing further than that I found Mr. Bowdish's ability, his integrity, his manner to be absolutely perfect, as related by Mr. Southworth, and also Mr. James McHale, of Shakopee, in whose ability I had great confidence. Mr. Bowdish was truly upright and honorable and efficient in every respect. I not only heard about his qualifications in this district, but when called to different places at different times, attorneys elsewhere expressed to me and told me that I had one of the finest and most efficient reporters in the State of Minnesota, and there wasn't any question in my mind but what they were telling me the absolute truth.

May it please the Court, he was always generous, he was always faithful, he was always upright, he was always reliable and industrious, and was above all, truly loyal. He knew no guile or deception – it wasn't in him. He had all the high attributes of a human man, the highest ideals of mankind, and he never betrayed his trust in the confidence imposed upon him by your Honor nor by myself. He was a man that never was found wanting in any respect. He was genial, happy, and a companion. During all his life, he idolized his children and he loved his wife.

He leaves behind him a wife, a son, Boyd, and a daughter, Beulah. These he thought of day after day, and I don't think more than two days passed while he was away from home on his mission that he did not communicate with his family. He always was anxious and wanted to know whether anything was wanted at home by the fireside.

That is all. May it Please the Court, I move that the Memorial submitted by my friend, Mr. Anderson be adopted and placed upon the records of this Court, there to remain until the end of time.

MR YOUNG. – May it please the Court: - as one who knew the decedent as I knew him and as others who have spoken knew him, it is really impossible for me to be present at these Memorial Services in his honor without expressing something of my sentiment and esteem for the man who was so worthy, so competent, and so whole-souled, so companionable, and of such high ideals as our late friend, Charles C. Bowdish. The character of the man, the habits of his life, were such that mere words, that no man can add to his life and character. He lived a wonderful life. I had occasion, not very long ago, to be present when an address was delivered characterizing the three learned professions, they were distinguished from the fact that these avocations were those of service, and reference was made to the professions being the Ministry, the Medicine, and the Law, and, after knowing Mr. Bowdish as we knew him, I feel that I would be willing to say that his profession

ought to be added to that of the learned professions. I am in favor of all that has been said here, as being said better than I am able to say it, but I want, simply, to say that I most heartily agree with the beautiful expression of sentiment of his character that were contained in the address by Mr. Anderson and by Judge Morrison.

MR. COLLINS. May it please the Court: probably, there isn't an attorney here with the exception of Mr. Odell, who knew all of these men, as I knew them. We have met here today to pay tribute to these men.

I knew Fred Brown, lived in the same block with him when his mother died. My early memory of Fred Brown was to see him when he and I went to the same school. One of the earliest remembrances I have of Fred Brown was when he and his younger sister toddled along with us to the old Forty-One School House at Shakopee.

I knew Robert H. McClelland when he practiced law in Shakopee. I became acquainted with him and it was at the same time my first campaign in politics in Scott County was made, that campaign was made in company with R. H. McClelland. He was running for County Attorney, and I was running for Clerk of the Court, when I was twenty one years old. We got together and campaigned together in Scott County.

Mr. Hinds I knew well. We often met in campaigns, both at the table in the court room and in the arena of politics, and he was a fine gentleman.

My friend, Charles G. Bowdish, I knew from the very first day he set foot in Shakopee, from the time he was professor in old Forty One, and then he went over and took charge of the Shakopee High School. He was Editor and Manager of the "Argus", and editor of the "Tribune" during all the time he was Court Reporter of the Eighth Judicial District.

It is very difficult to add anything to what the men here have said, they have portrayed the characteristics, the loyalty, the devotion of each of these men, but, there is one thing I wish to emphasize in relation to Mr. Bowdish – the fact that he made a successful reporter was the fact that he loved his work. He loved his work and he gloried in it, and it was because of that intense love of his work and the glory he had in it that gave him the reputation and made him one of the best court reporters in the state of Minnesota.

And, there is this that comes to us in the life of Judge Fred Brown, and in the life of Charles G. Bowdish, and Robert H. McClelland and Charles G. Hinds, these men who were connected with the courts, men who were officers of the courts, and that is this: there are no two greater factors in all human experience for the protection and welfare and upkeep of the nation that the two characteristics of Loyalty to the Country, Respect for the Courts and Devotion to Christianity. It has been noted

and has been found throughout the civilized world that in the degree that the respect for the Courts is lessened, in the degree that the respect for the Courts become less in the community, and that the observances of religious principles and tenets falls, in that same degree does civic government fail. It is because of the fact that lawyers as a general rule, and the officers of the Courts are conservative men, that they believe in conservatism, and in the building up of principles, and in the observance of the laws, that they believe in the right, they believe in religion, it is because these facts, because of their faithful adherence to those principles, and it is because these men whom we are met here today to honor, lived up to those principles, we are here to testify to their loyalty and to their faithfulness to the Courts, and to impress upon those who did not know them or did not know them so well, that faithfulness to the doctrine of law, and of Christian religion and of manhood, forever make secure and forever hold fast the institutions of the American government.

JUDGE TIFFT. - It was my good fortune to be acquainted with these four men to whom we give tribute today, some of them more intimately than others.

I remember meeting Judge Brown in 1889 and I became quite well acquainted with him later in life and thought a great deal of him.

I was a class-mate of Mr. Hinds in the law school and of course knew him for a great many years.

With Mr. McClelland, I was associated, as you all know in the practice of law, as I recall it for some thirteen years.

I became acquainted with Mr. Bowdish at the time he was appointed Court Reporter by Judge Morrison.

There is nothing that I can add to what has been so eloquently said here this afternoon. I feel that I am in a position to say that what has been said, has been truthfully said.

Our friends have well merited all that has been said of them or concerning them.

The request of the committee and the motion that these Memorials and the Minutes of this proceeding be placed upon the records of this Court, I take pleasure in granting, and

IT IS ORDERED that the Minutes of these Memorial Services be spread upon the records of the District Court of McLeod County and also upon the records of the District Court of Scott County.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Minutes of these Memorial services, insofar as they relate to MR. CHARLES G. BOWDISH, be spread upon the records of the

District Courts, respectively, of Carver County, Le Sueur County and Sibley County;

The Clerks of said Respective Courts will make such entry.

Dated, Glencoe, Minnesota, May 8th, 1922.

/s/ O. M. Tift

**District Judge,
Eighth Judicial District.**

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Posted MLHP: December 26, 2010.