

MEMORIAL

FOR

CHARLES WELLS FARNHAM
(1867 – 1931)

RAMSEY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

MARCH 26, 1932

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES WELLS FARNHAM

CHARLES WELLS FARNHAM was born at Buffalo, New York June 4th, 1867, the son of William Horatio Farnham and Maria Shiels Farnham. In 1872, when five years of age, he moved with his parents to Saint Paul, where he continuously resided until his death.

His academic education was obtained in the public schools of Saint Paul and later at Kemper Hall, Davenport, Iowa, where he was graduated in 1886. He received his degree of Bachelor of Law from the University of Minnesota and was admitted to practice, before the Supreme Court of Minnesota in 1895. That same year he began the practice of law.

He was married to Kate Humbird September 25, 1900. Mrs. Farnham and three children, John D. Farnham, Charles Wells Farnham and Caroline Farnham Davidson, survive him.

In May 1904, Mr. Farnham was engaged to assist the commission appointed by the Supreme Court to revise, codify and annotate the statutes. The final report of the Revision Committee to the Legislature states that he “thereafter labored with great diligence and success in the completion of our task.”

In 1906 he was connected with the insurance department of the State of Minnesota under Hon. Thomas D. O’Brien, then insurance commissioner. This experience gave him a reputation as an authority on insurance laws of this state, and for some years his opinions were solicited by many of the large insurance companies of the country.

He was a member and past-president of the Ramsey County Bar Association, a life member of the Minnesota State Bar Association, and its secretary from 1903 to 1912, inclusive; he was also an active member of the American Bar Association, serving on

several of its important committees, including that headed by Governor Whitman, of New York, to investigate crime in the United States.

His later years were devoted mainly to literature and travel. Possessing a large and well selected library, his recognized knowledge of good books caused him to be sought by local clubs and others to assist in establishing their libraries. Many of his books were autographed by their authors, some of whom were his personal friends. Such was James Whitcomb Riley, with whom he spent many of the poet's birthdays at his home on Lockerbie Street in Indianapolis. His well modulated voice was especially adapted to Riley's style and his interpretive readings were the special delight of the children of the many charitable, educational and religious bodies to which he gave freely his time and talents.

Mr. Farnham's genial personality and sincere kindness drew to him many friends at home and abroad. Perhaps no one in this section has been host to more notable visitors than was he.

He was an ardent admirer of that great American, Theodore Roosevelt, and his delivery of his celebrated Roosevelt address was received with enthusiasm by audiences from coast to coast.

In religion Mr. Farnham was an Episcopalian; he was a Mason and a Junior Pioneer, a member of the Minnesota, the University, and the Athletic clubs of Saint Paul, and the Union Club of Boston.

He died at his home on April 25, 1931. The end, which came without warning, was as peaceful and serene as had been his life. And so there passed a devoted husband and father, a genial companion, a true friend and ideal citizen.

March 26, 1932.

JOHN M. BRADFORD
ROY H. CURRIE
PATRICK J. RYAN
CHESTER L. CALDWELL
Chairman.

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Posted MLHP: September 17, 2011.