

DENNIS F. DONOVAN

Born: April 9, 1889, in Champion, Michigan
Died: September 16, 1974, in Rochester, Minnesota

DENNIS FRANCIS DONOVAN served on the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota from July 1945, to December 31, 1965, when he assumed senior status.

After receiving an LL.B. from the University of Michigan Law School in 1913, Donovan was in private practice in Duluth from 1914 to 1945. On June 1, 1945, he was nominated by President Harry S Truman to a seat on the federal district court made vacant by the death of George F. Sullivan on April 14, 1944. He was confirmed by the Senate on July 17, 1945, and received his commission the next day.

An official history of the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota published in 1989 included this sketch:

Dennis F. Donovan was appointed by President Truman in 1945 to fill the vacancy left by Judge Sullivan when he died a year earlier. Judge Donovan almost did not get the position, however, for President Roosevelt apparently had chosen another candidate. But Roosevelt died [on April 12, 1945] after the vacancy opened in 1944, leaving President Truman free to choose his own nominee, Judge Donovan.

Judge Donovan was born in Ironwood, Michigan. Like two other District of Minnesota federal judges, he graduated from the University of Michigan Law School. Judge Donovan moved to Duluth in 1913. He eventually practiced for the Oliver Iron Mining Company.

After his appointment to the federal bench, Judge Donovan was stationed in Duluth, but sat frequently in St. Paul. He served on the federal bench until he retired in 1965.¹

His death on September 16, 1974, at age eighty-five, was reported by the *Duluth Herald*:

**Judge D.
Donovan
succumbs**

Judge Dennis F. Donovan, 85, longtime federal district judge, died Monday at his home in Rochester, Minn. For many years, Judge Donovan made his home at 424 N. 26th Ave, E. Duluth.

Born in Champion, Mich., he graduated from the Ironwood High School and the University of Michigan Law School. In 1913, he entered private District Court for the District practice with the Duluth firm of Alford and Hunt and in 1916 joined the Oliver Mining Co. as the firm's trial attorney.

In August 1945, President Harry S Truman appointed Mr. Donovan as judge of the U. S. District Court for the District of Minnesota. Judge Donovan served on the federal bench until the last day of 1965.

During World War I, Judge Donovan was a member of the home guard, and during World War II was chairman of the United Service Organization in Duluth.

He was a member of Holy Rosary Cathedral Parish.

¹ *History of the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota* 16 (West, 1989). The booklet was published to commemorate the Constitution's Bicentennial year.

His memberships included the Delta Theta Phi legal fraternity, Minnesota Bar Association, National Lawyers Club, Knights of Columbus Council 447, McGolrick General Assembly of Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, Kitchi Club, St. Paul Athletic Club, Minneapolis Club and the Minnesota Club of St. Paul.

Judge Donovan was a past president of the Duluth Rotary Club and served on the board of Directors of the College of St. Scholastica and the board of the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra.

He is survived by his wife, Gertrude F; a son, Dennis, Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif; a daughter, Mrs. Albert C. (Mary Gertrude) Kelly, St. Paul; a brother, Joseph L., St. Paul, and eight grandchildren. Services will be at 11 a. m. Friday in Holy Rosary Cathedral. ² ■

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² *Duluth Herald*, September 18, 1974, at 32 (a photo is omitted).