

MEMORIAL

Frederick M. Catlin
(1859 – 1929)

Ramsey County Bar Association

May 8, 1930

M E M O R I A L

for

FREDERICK MILES CATLIN

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One by one those with whom we have been associated, either personally or professionally, drop out of our lives.

They are all too soon forgotten. It is a fine custom, established by our Bar, to commemorate at this annual session the lives of those members who have passed away.

Frederick Miles Catlin was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, on October 31, 1859. He attended the public schools of his native City, and graduated with honors from its high school.

He continued his studies at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., and there received the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in the class of 1881. After his graduation he entered the law office of Judge Frank Gunnison, an outstanding member of the Pennsylvania Bar, who was practicing at Erie, Pa.

In 1884 he was admitted to the Bar of Pennsylvania.

The same year he felt the call of the West, and started for Seattle, but, upon changing cars at St. Paul, friends of his college days urged him to locate here.

He was admitted to the Bar of Minnesota in 1884, and entered the active practice of law in St. Paul.

Shortly after, he entered the partnership of Barr & Catlin, and

among other clients represented the old St. Paul & Duluth Railway Company. Mr. Barr left the City of St. Paul about 1888 or 1889, and from that time on Mr. Catlin practiced his profession alone.

The genuine and unostentatious patriotism of the man was early exemplified. From 1892 to 1888 he was a member of the First Minnesota National Guard, serving as First Lieutenant and Judge Advocate.

When the Spanish-American War broke out in July, 1898, he was one of the first to volunteer for service. He was commissioned a First Lieutenant and became Regimental Adjutant of the 15th Minnesota Infantry. He remained in service with that regiment until the close of the war in 1899.

Mr. Catlin then returned to the active practice at the law, and continued with some success and marked distinction.

In 1911 he was chosen Vice-President of the Police Board of the City of St. Paul, and shortly thereafter—on the resignation of the President—he succeeded to that office.

About this time the Chief of police of the City resigned and for approximately nine months, no successor could be found for the office. In spite of the fact that the duties of the Chief of Police were entirely foreign to his profession his sense of public duty compelled him, to accept the office of Acting Chief of Police, and conscientiously endeavor to carry this thankless burden.

In recognition of this spirit and his standing as a lawyer, Governor Eberhardt appointed him District Judge, January 21, 1913, to fill out the unexpired term of Judge Hallan. Following this two-year period upon the Bench, Judge Catlin returned to active practice only to be again selected by Governor Preus to fill the unexpired term of Judge Dickson.

The second period on the Bench extended from April, 1921, to January 1, 1923. At its conclusion Judge Catlin again resumed private practice.

After intermittent periods of sickness for several years, his health largely failed in 1923, and although he recovered and for a time entered active practice he was never again robust. He died in St. Paul on November 17, 1929.

Judge Catlin married Bertha Crosman in 1898. As a good and faithful husband and kind father, he had a happy family life. He leaves surviving his widow and two daughters — Eleanor, the wife of Arnold D. Wyman, Minneapolis, and Elizabeth.

No bare outline of the facts at Judge Catlin's life is sufficient to picture the man himself. He was, in the words of a familiar phrase — "A true gentleman and a scholar". He was a patriot and soldier in the best sense of the words.

He enjoyed the personal respect of all who knew him and the professional respect of every member of the Bench and Bar. He never hesitated to sacrifice his personal, business or political interests in what he considered the performance of his conscientious duty to the City, State and country.

He was not merely a lawyer, he was "learned in the law". He never considered the prominence or power of the parties to a proceeding, or the personal effect upon himself of his conclusions. His only inquiries were — what were the facts and what rule at law as applicable. Nothing else was considered.

His character was such that it permitted no compromise with what he deemed to be wrong, no matter how great the personal advantage of such a compromise might have been. Unimpeachable integrity was one the outstanding characteristics

of the man. Recognition of this characteristic and of his faithful devotion to every detail of tasks assumed led to his frequent appointment, by the Courts, in later years as Receiver of a number of large corporations.

Because of his character and his attainments by reason of these qualities, Judge Catlin graced the Bar and Bench of this Court. He was truly an honor to our profession.

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick G. Ingersoll
Hon. Howard Wheeler
Phillip Gilbert
W. F. Hunt
Harold Harris
John F. Fitzpatrick, Chairman.



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