

A MEMORIAL FOR
STELLE SAMUEL SMITH *

(December 30, 1875 - May 20, 1952)

Stelle Samuel Smith was born at Faribault, Minnesota, December 30, 1875. He died while on a business trip at Lake Vermillion, Minnesota, May 20, 1952. He was the son of Milton Stelle and Flora Ingram Smith. He attended high school in Worthington, Minnesota and was valedictorian of his class. He obtained his degree of Bachelor of Laws from the University of Minnesota in 1899 and his degree of Master of Laws in 1900.

Stelle Smith had a subtle sense of humor. He took a philosophical view of life's problems. While attending the University law school he worked as a bookkeeper in one of Minneapolis' best known tailor shops. The pupil later became a successful Nicollet Avenue merchant. To fully appreciate Stelle Smith's ability, his capacity for friendship and his many fine characteristics, one had to know him intimately. He was a modest man.

May 10, 1902, Mr. Smith married Blanche Petrie. She died May 14, 1949. Mr. and Mrs. Smith had seven children, two daughters and five sons.

Stelle Smith was admitted to the Minnesota Bar in 1900. He started the practice of law at Worthington, Minnesota. In 1911 and 1912 he was City Attorney of Worthington. While engaged in the practice of law at Worthington, Mr. Smith had numerous business interests. He was the owner in whole or in part of several farm machinery sales agencies and he acquired and operated several farms.

About 1921 Mr. Smith moved to Minneapolis and engaged actively in the general practice of law until a short time before his death. At his death he was the majority stockholder and president of Stelle Smith, Inc., a Minnesota corporation, which owned substantial business property in Southeast Minneapolis.

Mr. Smith was one of the small group which met at St. Louis in 1919 and founded the American Legion. He was an active member in the Hennepin County and Minnesota Bar Associations, The Sons of the American Revolution, the American Legion and the Episcopal Church and the Order of Masons. He was a member of the Hennepin County Republican Club, the Minneapolis Athletic Club and he was the author of a volume of poems, anecdotes and philosophical articles which he entitled "Grandfather Said."

*** The date of this memorial and the names of the memorial committee are not known.**

Mr. Smith never talked much. He had a rare faculty of expressing himself with a minimum of words. This characteristic was notable in anything he wrote. In a pleading or a brief he invariably expressed his thoughts with the fewest possible words.

Mr. Smith was an excellent law student. He enjoyed solving intricate problems. He was not content to find the correct rule of law. He wanted to know the reasons for the rule. He owned an excellent law library. He kept it up to date and maintained it and used it extensively at his home during the last few years when he was semi-retired from the active practice of law. He prepared the pleadings and did the legal research on a corporate stock conversion case which resulted in 1936 in a verdict of \$223,320.00 for plaintiff. It was reported by the late District Court Clerk, Mr. George H. Hemperly, to be the largest verdict returned down to that time in the Hennepin County District Court.

For many years Mr. Smith was an active member of the Minnesota National Guard. He attained the rank of Colonel in the infantry. He was on numerous prize winning pistol teams, one or more of them National champions. He shot in National Guard pistol competitions with the late Mathias Baldwin of this court.

He was a keen student of military tactics. Long before we first heard of either General Rommel or Field Marshall Montgomery, and many months before there was any fighting in Africa, Mr. Smith predicted the turning point in World War II would develop in North Africa.

Mr. Smith was small in stature, but athletic. He enjoyed swimming and rowed a boat for an hour practically every morning during the last ten summers of his life. He enjoyed golf. When he drove into the sun he didn't bother much about watching his ball. He used to say that he'd walk 170 paces out from the tee and his ball would be nearby.

He was an enthusiastic sportsman and was very capable with a shot gun. He had a fine 12 gauge double barrel L. C. Smith. He hunted ducks and upland game every fall.

He like dogs and raised some good ones, particularly retrievers. The Saturday before his death he enthused about a young spaniel he had in training and expected to hunt with in the Fall.

Stelle Smith was a sound lawyer, a good citizen, a devoted father, and a loyal friend. ■

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