

MEMORIAL

CLEMENT A. SPENCER
(August 12, 1889 – January 7, 1940)

**Winona County District Court
Third Judicial District
Winona, Minnesota**

Winona County Bar Association

April 15, 1940

CLEMENT A. SPENCER

(1889 – 1940)

Clement Spencer was born on the family farm near St. Charles in Winona County in 1889. He graduated from the local high school, and earned his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1913. He practiced law in St. Charles until 1917 when he joined the army to fight in the Great War. Mustered out when his father died in late 1918, he returned to his hometown, reestablished his practice, and became immersed in civic affairs. He was city attorney for a decade, served on the school board, was a volunteer fireman and helped found a local chapter of the American Legion.

He died on January 7, 1940, in St. Charles. He was only fifty years old. The next day, the *Winona Republican-Herald* carried his obituary:

C. A. Spencer, St. Charles Lawyer, Dies at Age of 50

Former City Attorney Had
Been Ill Only a Few
Hours.

St. Charles, Minn.—(Special to The Republican-Herald)—Clement A. Spencer, 50, local attorney and former city attorney for ten years, died suddenly at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Mr. Spencer apparently had been in good health and had been at his office Saturday. He was ill only a few hours before his death.

Mr. Spencer served as city attorney here for ten years and had been a member of the school board. He was a member of the American Legion, having served in Company M, 388th Infantry, 97th division during the World war. He enlisted in 1917, and served until called home shortly before the death of his father, W. T. Spencer. He was a past commander of Hugh Watson post, American Legion, here, and a member

of Winona council No. 639, Knights of Columbus, and the Winona County Bar association.

He was a charter member of the Legion post here and also a member of the volunteer fire department.

He was born on the Spencer farm north of here, August 12, 1889, and was graduated from the St. Charles High school in 1909. He attended the University of Minnesota Law School, graduating in 1913, and returning to St. Charles to open a law office.

He married Angela Bodka of St. Paul June 28, 1922. Survivors are his wife, two sons, Paul and Arthur, at home; two daughters, Margaret Claire and Mary Corrine, at home; two sisters, Mrs. Edwin (Mabel) Guidinger, Grano, N. D., and Mrs. William (Mac) Markham, Horicon, Wis., and two brothers, W. E. Spencer, St. Charles, and John Spencer, Blue Earth.

A brother, Ben A. Spencer, at attorney at Virginia, Minn., died in 1932.¹

On April 15, 1940, the Winona County Bar Association presented the following memorial to him in district court:

MEMORIAL

Clement A. Spencer was born on his father's farm on August 12th, 1889, and was a life long resident of Winona County, Minnesota. He was brought up in the traditions of a staunch Catholic farm home.

His elementary schooling was at a little country school-house. He attended high school at the St. Charles High School, where he was a member of the football team. He and his older brother Ben studied law at about the same time. Ben studied at the St. Paul College of Law, while "Clem" completed the law course at the University of Minnesota,

¹ Winona Republican-Herald, Monday, January 8, 1940, at 3 (funeral arrangements and photo omitted).

graduating in 1913, in which year he was admitted to practice. Upon graduation, he returned to his home community and started practice in St. Charles. His practice of law was interrupted in 1917 when he enlisted in Company M, 338th Infantry, 97th Division, for service in the First World War. Upon returning home, he continued his practice in St. Charles until the time of his sudden and untimely death.

“Clem”, as he was known to his wide circle of friends, was a leader in the civic activities of St. Charles. He held office as City Attorney for the City of St. Charles, served as Commander of the Hugh Watson Post of the American Legion, being a charter member of that organization. He belonged to Winona Council #639, Knights of Columbus, the Winona County Bar Association, and was an important figure in Democratic affairs in Winona County.

He was married to Angela Dodka of St. Paul in 1922, and was the father of four children, Margaret Claire, Mary Corrine, Paul and Arthur.

“Clem” Spencer will be remembered as a sincere, able and respected leader of his community, a man of high moral and professional integrity. In his passing, the bar of this Court loses a lawyer who served his community fairly, capably, and patiently, respecting and creating respect for the high ideals of the profession.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ H. M. Lamberton, Jr.

/s/ George W. Kiefer

/s/ Martin A. Beatty

Committee

April 15, 1940

ADDENDUM

Spencer's death certificate on file at the Historical Society records his first name as "Clemons."

This Bar Memorial is one of several dozen by the Winona County Bar Association that will be posted on the MLHP. ■

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Posted MLHP: February 11, 2013.