

# Wallace H. Davis

( October 27, 1870 - December 7, 1920 )



Wallace H. Davis arrived in Minneapolis with his mother and three brothers in 1879. He was nine years old. He graduated Central High School, took two years at the University of Minnesota, then transferred to Amherst where he graduated in 1893. He attended Harvard Law School, graduating in 1896. He returned to Minnesota and was admitted to the bar on May 10, 1897.<sup>1</sup> Three years later he joined what became the David

<sup>1</sup> *1 Roll of Attorneys: Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970* 42 (State Law Library, 2011).

P. Jones & Company, a real estate and loan company in Minneapolis.<sup>2</sup> In 1917, the company placed the following advertisement in a booklet touting the city; he is listed vice president and counsel:<sup>3</sup>

## David P. Jones & Company

### Mortgage Loan Specialists are Playing Prominent Parts in Advancement of the Northwest

WAY back in 1854 Judge E. S. Jones came to Minneapolis. After service in the army during the rebellion he began to make mortgage investments for eastern clients. In 1868, just one year after the city was incorporated, this foresighted and conspicuous pioneer built a little real estate and mortgage loan office on the shore of the Mississippi near St. Anthony Falls.

Amid surroundings that offered but a smattering of encouragement this business took root, thrived and grew. In 1870 Judge Jones established the first savings bank in Minneapolis—the Hennepin County Savings Bank—and was its president until his death in 1890.

Only a few years afterward, in 1883, the son, fresh from his classes at the University, imbued with the vim and vigor characteristic of the clan, stepped into the office to share burdens with his father. That young man was David P. Jones.

On January 1, 1900, the business was incorporated under the present name, David P. Jones & Company.

Romance? Perhaps. But Minneapolis men see something more behind these strides than the filmy fantasy called opportunism. It has been concentrated energy, conscientious endeavor and hard work that has placed David P. Jones & Company high in the counsels of financial institutions of the Northwest today. Mr. Jones' knowledge of realty values, his experience in the financial field and his unusual foresight have made him the advisor of scores of business men and corporations east and west, when making investments.

During the third of a century he has been intimately associated with the growth and development of Minneapolis he has been directly instrumental in bringing hun-

dreds of people and millions of invested dollars to the city. Whether it be in first mortgage loans, real estate, insurance, rentals, the management of estates or any other branch of the business, the patron places his affairs in the hands of the company with that abiding confidence fostered by years of experience that it will be given the undivided attention of men who are making Minneapolis grow.

Further evidence of the esteem in which Mr. Jones is held by the people of Minneapolis was given when, after serving as alderman from his ward for six years in 1904, he was given the highest office in the power of citizens of the municipality. He was the first and only "native son" mayor of Minneapolis. Under his administration saloons were regulated strictly according to law and were for the first time closed on Sunday. Gambling and prostitution were placed under the ban and vice hid its head for the period of his incumbency.

As head of the Jones Realty Company, the Jones-Davis Company and as vice president of the Hennepin County Savings Bank as well as in other institutions of magnitude the power of the advice of Mr. Jones is being constantly felt. He is a member of the Park Board and has long been president of the board of trustees of Carleton College of Northfield.

Associated with him are men who have been tested and found worthy. Wallace H. Davis is vice-president and counsel, while Wallace C. McWhinney is secretary-treasurer. David Gale Jones, assistant secretary-treasurer. They have surrounded themselves with trained specialists maintaining the reputation of the firm built up during the half century in which Minneapolis has made phenomenal strides.

He died on December 7, 1920, at age fifty. The evening *Minneapolis Journal* carried his obituary:

**WALLACE H. DAVIS,  
RESIDENT SINCE  
1879, IS DEAD**

**Attorney Seriously Ill Six Weeks**

Wallace H. Davis, vice president of David P. Jones & Co., and a resident of Minneapolis since 1879, died early to-day at St. Mary's hospital. He had been seriously ill for six weeks.

<sup>2</sup> His photograph on the first page is from *Men of Minnesota* 425 (1915).

<sup>3</sup> *Minneapolis Golden Jubilee, 1867-1917: A History of Fifty Years of Civic and Commercial Progress* 159 (June 1917).

Funeral services will take place tomorrow at 3 p.m. at Lakewood cemetery chapel, with Dr. J. E. Bushnell officiating.



WALLACE H. DAVIS.

Mr. Davis had been prominent in the business and social-life of the city for a number of years. He was unmarried. Born at Kankakee, Ill., he came with his mother and three brothers to Minneapolis in 1879. He was graduated from the Central high school, took two years' work at the University of Minnesota and two years at Amherst college, where he was graduated in 1893.

**In Elihu Root's Office.**

Three years later he finished a course at the Harvard law school. On leaving college, he spent a short time in the office of Elihu Root, in New York, then returned to Minneapolis, where he was in the law office of Atwater, Jackson & Hill. In 1900 he became connected with E. S. Jones & Sons, since incorporated as David P. Jones & Co.

Mr. Davis was a member of the Amherst and Harvard clubs of Minneapolis, of the Delta, Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the Minneapolis Athletic club and the University club. He had been a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church since 1887. He is survived by two brothers, Edward A. Davis of Minneapolis and Dr. Frank C. Davis of Lewistown, Mont.; a nephew, Walter Davis, now at Dartmouth college, and a niece, Evelyn Davis, of Minneapolis.<sup>4</sup>

The *Amherst Alumni Quarterly* also noted his passing:

Wallace H. Davis died at St. Mary's hospital, Minneapolis, Minn., on December 7, 1920. He had been ill for a number of weeks, after what at first appeared to be a nervous breakdown, but which later developed into a paralyzed condition due, it is thought, to some infection of the heart.

Davis had for twenty-five years been associated with the David P. Jones Company, one of the leading real estate and

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<sup>4</sup> *Minneapolis Journal*, December 7, 1920, at 28 (headline shortened, list of honorary pallbearers omitted).

investment companies of Minneapolis, and was its vice-president and counsel at the time of his death. He devoted himself most assiduously to his business, throwing into it a great deal of force and energy. Although he had few outside interests, he was always a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of Amherst activities in the Northwest. He seldom returned to Amherst, but never lost his affection for the college or for his classmates of whom he always spoke with great enthusiasm.

An outstanding feature of his career was his untiring devotion to his widowed mother, with whom he lived up to the time of her death two years ago, and for whom he sacrificed almost everything in the way of social life. His brother, Frank C. Davis, '95, lives in Lewistown, Mont., where he is a successful physician, and a second brother, Edward A. Davis, was associated with him in business in the insurance department of the firm.

Wallace H. Davis was born in Kankakee, Ill., on October 27, 1870, the son of Alanson E. and Frank P. (Dean) Davis. He prepared for college at Minneapolis High School, and after two years at the University of Minnesota entered Amherst at the beginning of his junior year. He obtained the degree of LL.B. from Harvard Law School in 1896 and was admitted to the bar the following year. He had never married. His death leaves a big vacancy in the business circle in which he moved and where he was highly honored and appreciated.<sup>5</sup> ▪

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<sup>5</sup> 10 *Amherst Graduates' Quarterly* 128 (February 1921). Obituary written by Frederick S. Allis, Secretary.

A memorial by the county bar association has not been located. There is no memorial to him in the proceedings of the Minnesota State Bar Association in 1921 or 1922.