

**IN MEMORIAM**

**JOSEPH C. FLAHAVAN**

[ October 29, 1882 ▪ October 13, 1953 ]

**HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION  
DISTRICT COURT  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

# Joseph C. Flahavan

( October 29, 1889 ▪ October 13, 1953 )

Joseph C Flahavan was born in Minneapolis on October 29, 1889, the son of John and Anna Flahavan. He attended Holy Rosary Parish Grade School, finishing there in June, 1904 and immediately entered South High School, graduating in June, 1908. Three years later he enrolled at the Northwestern College of Law in Minneapolis from which institution he received his degree in 1915 and was in that year admitted to the Bar of the state of Minnesota. He continued the active practice of his profession until ill health compelled him to retire in September of 1953. He died October 13, 1953 within a few days of his 64th anniversary.

Joe Flahaven early learned the need of hard work and persistent effort, and the success of his professional activities in the later years of his life are evidence of his having learned this lesson well. His early years found him burdened with the normal chores of schoolboys of that era. During all of his high school days he was employed in neighborhood stores, giving him clerking and merchandise experience which later were valuable to him in the carrying on of his highly specialized law practice. Finishing high school, he entered upon more important, full-time duties, supporting himself and assisting his parents with expenses incident to raising a large family in those days. During all of the time that he was studying law at night school he held a position with the Cream of Wheat Company. Thereafter he entered the credit department of Dayton's Department Store and it was this work which led him into the association with Art Rotering, who was then operating the Commercial Services Company, which is still a prosperous, going concern in the Palace Building in Minneapolis. The Commercial Services Company performed highly specialized service in connection with credits and collections for most of the retail merchants of the city of Minneapolis, and from the time he entered upon that work in 1920 his activities grew and flourished until in 1941 he acquired ownership of the company upon the retirement of Mr. Rotering. Joe Flahavan continued to operate the company successfully

until September, 1953, when his failing health forced him to retire from all active work and he died about a month later.

Mr. Flahavan's record as a lawyer is one to be proud of. While many of the individual cases which he handled involved comparatively small amounts, the volume of business which he conducted and the care and efficiency with which he did his work and built his organization resulted in his enjoying a very satisfying legal practice. Measured by the modern yardstick of income he was very successful in his highly specialized practice.

Mr. Flahavan was a just and conscientious man. He was eminently fair, both in his dealings with his clients and with those against whom it was necessary for him to proceed. Never in his long history was he known to have been accused of sharp practices or mean and small dealings. On the contrary, Joe Flahavan many times took it upon himself, and at his own expense, to make it easier for debtors against whom it was necessary for him to proceed. He was always ready to grant a favor to a fellow lawyer but seldom, if ever, asked one for himself. He was always ready to intercede for a debtor when intercession was indicated by the facts. But when occasion required, and particularly where someone sought to take unfair advantage of his client, he was exacting but always with justice and without rancor. Joe Flahavan enjoyed the confidence and respect of his clients and was held in high regard by the lawyers in this district.

He was a member of the Bar Association and very active in its affairs, continuously serving on its committees and doing a large amount of work which has benefited all of the members of the bar. He was likewise a member of various credit organizations throughout the United States and from time to time held high offices in these organizations. But above and beyond his material accomplishments Joe Flahavan was an honest, upright, Christian gentleman who loved and helped his fellow man and was loved and respected by all who came in contact with him, friend and foe alike. He was ever ready to lend a helping hand to the poor and unfortunate and many were the recipients of his bounty, given quietly and without ostentation.

Mr. Flahavan was married to Hallie Trow on April 25, 1917 and to them were born seven children: Rev. Robert J. Flahavan, a Priest of the Jesuit Order, now teaching at Marquette University in the city of Milwaukee; Kathleen I. Flahavan who died in 1928; Molly Flahavan Landrigan, now residing at St. Thomas, North Dakota; Anne Flavin Abbott, now residing at St. Paul, Minnesota; Edward J. Flahavan; Mark A. Flahavan; and Ruth H. Flahavan.

His family life was a model of perfection. He was a good husband, a devoted father. He had three sons, one is now a Jesuit Priest, and two are now in the seminary preparing for the priesthood. His life was worthwhile, and of him it can be said, truly, the world is better for his having lived. •

## Appendix

Joseph Flahavan was admitted to the bar on June 14, 1915. He resided at 2531 16th Avenue South in Minneapolis at the time.  
Roll of Attorneys, Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970, at 134 (Minnesota Digital Library).

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