

Memorial

For

Harold Harris

(November 21, 1857 • August 24, 1933)



Ramsey County Bar Association
Ramsey County District Court
Second Judicial District
St. Paul, Minnesota
March 31, 1934

**MEMORIAL FOR HAROLD HARRIS
SUBMITTED BY
THE RAMSEY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION AT A
SPECIAL TERM OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF
RAMSEY COUNTY,
ON MARCH 31, 1934.**

Harold Harris, for many years a member of the Ramsey County Bar Association and a practitioner before this court, departed this life on 24 August 1933. We desire at this time to present to the Court the following memorial of his life and activities.

Mr. Harris was born in Pierce County, Wisconsin, November 21, 1857. He spent his boyhood on a farm in the Saint Croix Valley in Wisconsin and received his early education in the country schools. Declining to follow farming as a vocation, as his parents had planned, he left home at an early age to earn money with which to secure an education. He entered the State Normal School at River Falls, Wisconsin, from which he graduated in 1882. He then entered the University Wisconsin from which he graduated in 1886 with the degree B.S. Pursuing his studies in the Law School of the same institution, he graduated in 1889 with the degree LL. B.

After his graduation from the Normal School, he taught several terms of country school, and after his first graduation from the University in 1886, he was Principal of the High School at Unity, Wisconsin, for two years, reading law during that period. Upon his graduation from the Law School in 1889, he came to Saint Paul, and was admitted to the Bar. He practiced law here continuously up to the time of his death.

He was married at West Bend, Wisconsin, in 1890, to Jennie H. Salter, who survives him. He is also survived by three children, Harold R. Harris and Helen E. Harris, both of whom live in Saint Paul, and Gilbert E. Harris, who now resides in Los Angeles California. The latter is a lawyer and practiced law in Saint Paul for a number of years.

Harold Harris was a member of the Ramsey County Bar for 44 years. Although he could scarcely be counted as one of the pioneer lawyers, he came here while many of the pioneer lawyers will still living and thus able to transmit in the form of tradition many unchronicled events of the early days affecting the Bench and Bar in Saint Paul.

During his long practice of the law, Mr. Harris never had a law partner. He always practiced alone. For more than 20 years he had his offices in the old German American Bank Building, located at Fourth and Robert Streets, where the First National Bank Building now stands. At the time of his death, he had offices in the Commerce Building, where he had been for more than 12 years. While his practice was of a general nature, real estate and probate matters predominated. As a result he acquired a far-reaching and practical knowledge of real estate and probate law.

He enjoyed personal contacts and his well-balanced and constructive mind found almost useful expression in consultation. He had a profound sense of professional obligation, and manifested commendable industry in the service of his clients.

Throughout his professional care career he exemplified all those principles of conduct which are constantly held up to the members of our profession as typifying the highest ideals of the Bar. Early in his practice, he set high personal and professional standards for himself and maintained them throughout his life. The qualities which he exhibited in his relations to the courts and to his fellow members of the Bar won for him their confidence and esteem.

He had a strong sense of personal and professional integrity, a quality which could never be too common in our profession. He prepared his cases with painstaking care and always displayed a marked fidelity to his clients, many of whom retained him as their counselor over long periods of time.

His was a life of varied interests. While his profession held first place in his affections, he found time for other activities. Notable among them were his

services to the State as a member of the Minnesota Historical Society and his labors on behalf of the conservation of wild life.

Mr. Harris took a very active part in the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. He joined the Society in 1911 and was elected to its Executive Council in 1912, serving as a member of that body until his death. He became ever more closely identified with the work of the Society in 1927, when he was appointed a member of the Executive Committee, a position which he held until 1933. He had a deep and intelligent interest in the history of Minnesota, and he proved a very valuable member of the Society. At least six times he joined in summer historical tour sponsored by the Society, which to his mind were tours not only out into the state, but also back into the past.

He placed a high value on the privileges of outdoor recreation and devoted himself unsparingly to the conservation and protection of wild life. He rendered conspicuous service along this line as a Director of the Minnesota Game Protective League. Indeed, his service to this league for sportsmen is written in its record from the beginning. He had known intimately from his boyhood that which he sought to preserve. His advice upon proposed legislation relating to conservation was invaluable. He helped to organize the Ramsey County Sportsmen's Association, and his active interest in the affairs of that organization was a source of much real inspiration. At the time of his death, he was President of the Minnesota River Gun Club, an office he held with that group of sportsmen for twenty years.

Mr. Harris was a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association, the Ramsey County Bar Association, the Odd Fellows and Modern Woodmen of America. In politics he was a Democrat. While he never was a candidate for any public office, he took an active interest in political affairs. He affiliated with the Unitarian Church. One who knew him intimately as a member of the Board of Trustees of Unity Church of Saint Paul has paid this tribute:

“He had a very searching mind and used it in all matters of religion with fairness and independent courage. He was truly tolerant of the opinions with which he did not agree and always

considerate of those with whom he differed. His loss to his church will be much greater than his own modesty would have supposed. He was a gentle man as well as a gentleman in every relationship; but he never lacked the strength and firm conviction and courage to say and do what he thought right.”

Whatever he undertook to do in any relation of life, he did thoroughly and well, bringing to it earnestness of purpose and constant devotion. He stood high in the esteem of those of us who knew him best. We shall always remember him for his gentle personality, unpretentious manner, friendly approach and high professional ideals.

Harry P. Churchill,
Frank Ford,
Charles J. Andre, Chairman.
Committee appointed by Mr. M. J.
Doherty, President of the Ramsey County
Bar Association, to prepare
memorial for the late Harold Harris.

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Appendix

Profiles from:

Little Sketches of Big Folks (1907) &
Albert N. Marquis, ed., *The Book of Minnesotans* (1907)

Little Sketches of Big Folks (1907):

HARRIS Harold, St Paul. Res 731 Osceola av, office 209 German-American Nat Bank bldg. Lawyer. Born Nov 21, 1857 in Pierce county Wis, son of Gilbert and Anna (Gunderson) Harris. Received his education at country schools and State Normal School at River Falls Wis, graduating in 1882. Entered Univ of Wis and graduated B S 1886; law course B L 1889. Has been engaged in practice for 16 years in St Paul making a specialty of real estate law. Sec of Park Region Land Co and dir Wis Blue Grass Land Co; v pres Polk County Land & Imp Co; sec Truant Gold and Silver Co Helena Mont and member of the firm of E E Sutton & Co. Member Commercial Club of St Paul and I O O F.

The Book of Minnesotans (1907):

HARRIS, Harold, lawyer; born in Pierce County, Wis., Nov. 21, 1857; son of Gilbert and Anna (Gunderson) Harris; brought up on farm; educated in country schools in Pierce Co., Wis.; River Falls (Wis.) Normal School, graduating, 1882; University of Wisconsin, graduating, B.Sc., 1886, LL.B., 1889. Married at West Bend, Wis., 1890, to Jennie Salter. Taught several terms of country school after graduation from normal school, and after graduation from University, 1886, was principal of Unity (Wis.) High School two years, reading law during that period. Admitted to bar Oct. 1, 1889, and has since then practiced law in St. Paul, with specialty in real estate law. Secretary and director Park Region Land Co.; director Wisconsin Blue Grass Land Co.; vice president and director Polk Co. Improvement Co.; secretary and director Truant Gold and Silver Mining Co. Member American, Minnesota State and Ramsey County Bar associations. Democrat. Unitarian. Member Odd Fellows, Modern Woodmen of America. Recreations: Hunting, fishing. Club: Commercial. Office: National German-American Bank Bldg. Residence: 731 Osceola Av., St. Paul.

Credit: The photograph on the first page is from *Men of Minnesota (1902)*.

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