

**MEMORIAL**

**TO**

**DANIEL E. RICHTER**

**( December 31, 1869 ▪ November 17, 1935 )**

**Hennepin County Bar Association  
Hennepin County District Court  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
February 8, 1936**

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN

DISTRICT COURT  
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

IN RE MEMORIAL TO:

**DAN E. RICHTER**

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DAN E. RICHTER, born near Lima, Ohio, December 31, 1869, was a grandson of Louis Richter, born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, who came to the United States early in 1900 (sic). In his early years, Dan was influenced by the religious zeal that characterized the early generations of the family. Louis Richter, father of Dan, was also a minister of the Gospel. He was born in New York State, lived in Ohio for many years, where he was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church. He was very active in organization work. Dan's mother was born in Ohio, descended of a family, many of the male members of which fought in the Revolutionary War.

Dan Richter attended school at New Bremen, Ohio; also at Indianapolis and completed his early training in the Ohio Northern University at Ada. He was admitted to the Bar June 20, 1890, at St. Cloud, Minnesota, and remained at Royalton to practice until 1893. From there he went to Fargo where he practiced until he assumed the management of the Ashland Leader at Ashland, Wisconsin, where he was also assistant county attorney. Then at Mauston, Wisconsin, where his father had organized and built a church, Dan practiced law for two years. He then returned to North Dakota where he took charge of the Larimore Pioneer.

Dan always had a penchant for the unusual. While in Chicago in 1900, he accepted the invitation to accompany the famous pedestrian Edward Payson Weston in a walk across country from Chicago to Minneapolis. At that time, Dan Richter went on the staff of the Minneapolis Times. He was sent out as special correspondent at the time of the opening of the Indian Reservation in North Dakota where for forty-eight hours he held the position and performed the duties of registrar. He was himself the first man to register but did not file a claim. After this experience, he returned to Minneapolis, taking a place on the staff of

the Minneapolis Tribune, with which he was connected from 1910 to 1912. Dan wrote a by-line for the Tribune and deserves considerable credit for building up the first Boy Scout organization in Minneapolis. He conducted the column in the Tribune under the title of the "Tribune Scout."

Dan was quite prominent in the political campaign of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt who was running on the Progressive ticket about that time.

During the World War, Dan served as recruiting officer for the infantry where he recruited Companies A and B of the First Infantry Regiment of Minnesota, after which he was called to organize the Home Guard under the auspices of the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety. He himself became a sergeant in Company B of the First Infantry which for several months guarded the mills and the shipments of flour at Minneapolis. Later he was commissioned first lieutenant and Guard, and in 1918 was ordered to mobilize his battalion and report for duty in the region of Northern Minnesota, where the forest fires were raging, destroying Cloquet and adjacent areas. He was made chief of the ambulance service and directed the rescue work which brought out more than 800 people from the burned district. He was especially cited for carrying a little girl eighteen miles to an ambulance. She was taken to a hospital and survived her injuries.

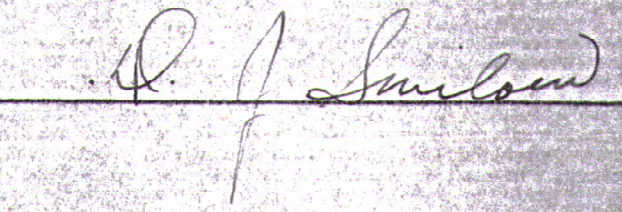
Dan's political interests varied. He loved the fray and while it is somewhat amazing to recount that in 1916, Richter abandoned his law practice in Minneapolis in order to join in a speaking campaign of Minnesota and North Dakota against the Non-Partisan League, it was equally amazing for him to take the cudgel in behalf of the Constitutional Defense Alliance, an organization which he sponsored in an endeavor to oppose the influx of the same political party through the domination of its leaders in North Dakota in the last campaign.

Mr. Richter married at Ashland, Wisconsin in 1896, May Louise Sargent. She was born in Michigan, attended the Ashland High School and the college at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, specializing in music and art. Mrs. Richter is a past commander of the Ladies of the Maccabees. Dan is also survived by two sons, Louis Sargent Richter and Edgar Paul Richter. He was national chairman of the Modern Woodmen of America's Assembly and a member of the Hennepin County, Minnesota State and American Bar Associations.

Like a good many lawyers, Dan's fault was in the possession of an overabundance of sympathy for the troubles of worthy people. The poor, the destitute and the hungry always found a friend in Dan Richter. His sense of humanity was much greater than his desire for the aggrandizement of wealth. It

is not unusual, therefore, that he died a poor man, November 17, 1935. I know from personal experience with him that he would literally give his last dollar away to someone whom he considered less fortunate than himself. To those who knew him for his real character, he will never die.

Dated: February 8, 1936.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. E. Richter", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is located to the right of the typed date "Dated: February 8, 1936." The entire document is enclosed in a rectangular border.

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## APPENDIX

In 1935, Richter placed the following profile in the third volume of Theodore Christianson's *Minnesota: The Land of Sky-tinted Waters*, which contains short biographies of subscribers to this ambitious publishing enterprise (it came out in five volumes).<sup>\*</sup> The reader who takes a cursory glance at it will see that it is the basis of the bar memorial delivered the following year. This was not unusual. Newspaper obituaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries frequently reprinted parts of a profile of the deceased that had been published earlier in a county history or compendium of biographies (without attributing the original source). Many subscribers to these history books must have foreseen that their self-portraits would become part of their own obituaries.

HON. DAN E. RICHTER, newspaper man, lawyer, soldier, orator, came to Minnesota over thirty years ago, and has well earned the designation of "Fighting Dan," by the courage and aggressiveness with which he has performed his duty in behalf of many worthy public movements and causes.

Mr. Richter was born at New Bremen near Lima, Ohio, December 31, 1869, son of Louis and Sarah Jane (Schroyer) Richter. His grandfather, Louis Richter, was born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, and came to the United States early in the last century. He was a preacher of the German Reformed denomination. Some of the religious zeal that characterized the early generations of the family

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<sup>\*</sup> Theodore Christianson, 3 *Minnesota: The Land of Sky-tinted Waters* 160-163 (1935).

has been evident in Dan Richter's attitude toward some of the issues of our modern American life. Louis Richter, father of Dan, was also a minister of the Gospel. He was born in New York State, lived in Ohio for many years, where he was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church. As a churchman his ability was pronounced as an organizer. When he was sent into a community, he soon gathered together the nucleus of church membership, organized it, put it on a sound footing, and then immediately would be called to another district to repeat his previous work. He was a Republican in politics.

His wife, Sarah Jane Schroyer, was born in Ohio, daughter of Daniel Schroyer, a native of Pennsylvania and a cooper by trade. The Schroyer family has been long in America and some representatives were soldiers in the Revolutionary War. Rev. Louis Richter and wife had six children. Of the three living Dan E. is the oldest. Martha is the wife of Charles E. Foote, of Hoquiam, Washington. Ellen is the wife of Alphonso Foote, a farmer at Royalton, Minnesota.

Dan E. Richter attended school at New Bremen, Ohio, where his father was one of his instructors. He was also in school at Indianapolis, and completed his early training in the Ohio Northern University at Ada. He was admitted to the bar June 20, 1890, at St. Cloud, Minnesota, and remained at Royalton to practice until 1893. From there he went to Fargo, North Dakota, looking after the legal work in connection with the leasing of the extensive real estate holdings of Col. Charles A. Morton, an old army officer who had been a member of Sherman's staff. To some extent he practiced law while at Fargo. Then came another chapter of his experience when he managed the *Ashland Leader* at Ashland, Wisconsin, and for two years was assistant county attorney there. At Mauston, Wisconsin, where his father had organized and built a church, Dan Richter practiced law for two years. Returning to North Dakota he took charge of the *Larimore Pioneer*.

Mr. Richter was in Chicago in 1900 and accepted the invitation to accompany the famous pedestrian Edward Payson Weston in a walk across country from Chicago to Minneapolis. Mr. Richter went on the staff of the *Minneapolis Times*, was sent out as special correspondent at the time of the opening of the Indian Reservation in North Dakota and for forty-eight hours held the position and

performed the duties of registrar. He was himself the first man to register, but did not file a claim. After this experience he returned to Minneapolis and took a place on the staff of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, with which he was connected from 1910 to 1912. The files of the *Tribune* for those years are proof of his activities as a news and feature writer. He deserves the chief credit for building up the first Boy Scout organization in Minneapolis, and for some time he conducted a column in the *Tribune* under the title of "Tribune Scout."

In 1910 he was swimming instructor for about 600 boys at Lake Calhoun. He also organized the Three Lakes Club, was elected its president, the chief purpose of this organization being to secure the cooperation of a number of interested persons who were willing to look after the bathers at the beaches and when necessary perform the services of life guards.

Mr. Richter appeared prominently in the political campaign 1912 when he made numerous speeches through North Dakota in behalf of Col. Theodore Roosevelt, who was running on the Progressive ticket that year.

At the time America entered the World War Mr. Richter was serving as recruiting officer for the infantry. He recruited Companies A and B of the First Infantry Regiment of Minnesota, and after that was called to organize the Home Guard under the auspices of the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety. He himself became a sergeant in Company B of the First Infantry, which for several months guarded the mills and the shipments of flour at Minneapolis. Later he was commissioned first lieutenant and adjutant of the Thirteenth Battalion of the Minnesota Home Guard, and in 1918 he was ordered to mobilize his battalion and report for duty in the region of Northern Minnesota, where the forest fires were raging, destroying Cloquet and adjacent areas. He was made chief of the ambulance service, and directed the rescue work which brought out more than 800 people from the burned district. He was especially cited for carrying a little girl eighteen miles to an ambulance. She was taken to a hospital and survived her injuries.

It was in 1916 that the Non-Partisan League made its spectacular raid against the established political parties in North Dakota. Dan E. Richter was one of the ablest of the men called to fight this new

political phenomenon. For months he practically abandoned his law practice at Minneapolis in order to join in the speaking campaign over Minnesota and North Dakota. He was put on the speakers bureau of the Independent Voters Association at Fargo, and it was during 1919 that the title of "Fighting Dan" was appropriately bestowed upon him for his aggressive part in the campaign to prevent the spread of Non-Partisan League methods into adjoining states. He was absolutely fearless, and did not hesitate to invade the strongholds of Non-Partisan sentiment in North Dakota. On more than one occasion stones were hurled on him, and in making his speeches he had to defy hostile opinion, and only his ready wit and courageous front saved him and the cause he represented. Mr. Richter is one of the few men who can understand and describe the violence of the passions and emotions which made his political campaigns unparalleled in the story of the Northwest. On November 1, 1919, he organized the Loyal Voters Association and later he made the first speech in North Dakota in the campaign for the recall of Governor Frazier, the Non-Partisan governor of that state. In 1920 the adjunct general of Minnesota deputized Mr. Richter as his official representative to meet and greet a group of Polish soldiers who had returned from France after three years of military service. In the same year he received a request from Washington to give his services as a speaker in behalf of the Constitutional Defense Alliance, and he spent a number of weeks working for that cause in Wisconsin and elsewhere. For several months he was on a speaking tour in Washington, and began and ended a campaign against radical sentiment in that state.

Through all these years Mr. Richter has steadily practiced law at Minneapolis, but has always been available when a speaker of unusual effectiveness was required. From its adoption he has been sturdily opposed to the eighteenth amendment, and in giving credit for the influences which finally aroused the people to general revolt against that "noble experiment" his name should not be unnoticed.

Mr. Richter married at Ashland, Wisconsin, in 1896, Louise Sargent. She was born in Michigan, attended the Ashland high school and the college at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, specializing in music and art. Thousands of people in Minneapolis have learned to appreciate the wonderful quality of her voice as a singer in church choirs and in other organizations. She is a past commander of the Ladies of the

Maccabees. Mr. and Mrs. Richter have two children. Their son, Louis Sargent Richter, who was educated at Minneapolis and is a traveling representative of the American Linen Company, is married and has two children, Louis Earle and LeRoy. Edgar Paul Richter since completing his education has been associated with his father. The family are members of the Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church.

Through all the years Mr. Richter has been a steadfast Republican, though thoroughly progressive and sharing the general western attitude, so that he supported Roosevelt in 1912. He has taken part in all the recent campaigns until 1932, and has frequently been a delegate to political conventions. He has been national chairman of the Modern Woodmen of America's Assembly. His favorite sports are swimming, hunting and fishing, and he still takes a deep interest in the Boy Scout movement which he helped institute in the Northwest. He is a member of the Hennepin County, Minnesota State and American Bar associations. He is still chairman of the Constitutional Defense Alliance and on the Hennepin County Republican Repeal Committee, and in December, 1931, was appointed regional manager of the northern central states, comprising Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois, for the Constitutional Rights Association of America. •

### Afterword

In December 1903, a Dan E. Richter of Minneapolis addressed the annual convention of the Minnesota Educational Association on "Teaching Touch Typing." The address can be found online: Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-first Annual Convention of the Minnesota Educational Association 293-295 (1904). It is not known whether the speaker is the same man who is the subject of the foregoing bar memorial. •

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