

**MEMORIAL
SERVICE**

FOR

S. D. J. BRUSKI
(1901 - 1963)

**THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
WINONA COUNTY**

JANUARY 17, 1964

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WINONA

DISTRICT COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

In the matter of the Memorial
Service for Judge S. D. J. Bruski.

The January, 1964 Term of the District Court of Winona County was opened on January 13th at 11:00 o'clock A.M., the Honorable Leo P. Murphy presiding, and almost every member of the Winona County Bar Association was in attendance.

THE COURT: Mr. Sawyer, I understand you have a matter to be brought before the Court?

Mr. SAWYER: Yes, Your Honor, a Memorial has been prepared in memory of the late S. D. J. Bruski; I would like to ask Mr. William Hull to read that at this time.

THE COURT: Mr. Hull.

Mr. HULL: Your Honor; gentlemen. I would like to make a personal comment that I had the good fortune in being in almost daily contact with S. D. J. Bruski during the last thirteen years of his life and I therefore appreciate having the privilege of presenting this tribute to him.

S. D. J. Bruski was a lawyer, a judge, and a gentleman. He was a credit to the legal profession and to this community of which he was a product.

S. D. J. Bruski, affectionately known as "Si", was born in Winona, Minnesota on December 23, 1901 to Leonard and Mary Bruski. He attended Cotter High School and St. Mary's College in this City. Thereafter he went to Georgetown University and the University of Minnesota. He received his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1930. Before receiving his legal education he was employed at one of our local banks. He was admitted to the Bar of the State of Minnesota in 1930 and opened a law office in Winona that year. He developed a most successful law practice and excelled in several specialized fields

of the law. He was a local authority in real estate and probate law. He served as Examiner of Titles for many years. He was most generous with his time and was always ready to help younger lawyers in the areas of the law that he knew best.

During his more than thirty years as an attorney, Si Bruski served our City and County in many capacities. He was chairman of the Winona County Welfare Board from 1937 to 1947. He was appointed in 1940 as government appeal agent for Selective Service in Winona County. He served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the State organization of Welfare Boards for several terms. In 1941 he was named chairman of its state merit system advisory committee. In the 1950's he was on the Winona County Dependency Project advisory committee.

Si Bruski was City Attorney from May 1, 1947 to May 31, 1950. He served one year as President of the Winona County Bar Association. He was also President of the Third District Bar Association for one year. He functioned on many committee assignments of the Winona County Bar Association, Third District Bar Association and State Bar Association. He worked diligently in many other local and civic capacities far too numerous to detail.

In 1957 S. D. J. Bruski was appointed Judge of the Probate Court to fill the vacancy created by the elevation of Judge Leo F. Murphy to the District Court Bench. Judge Bruski served as Probate Judge for more than a year. During that time he handled the routine of that office with efficiency, and he handled the problems of the neglected child, the wayward child, the incompetent person and the inebriate with fairness, kindness and deep understanding.

In June 1959 Judge Bruski was appointed Municipal Judge. In 1961 he was elected to that office for a six year term. As in all of his undertakings, he performed his duties as Municipal Judge well.

On November 21, 1939 Judge Bruski was married to the former Angela Zielinski at St. John the Baptist Church in Salem, Massachusetts. He is survived by his wife, one daughter and two sisters, all of Winona.

Judge Bruski was energetically engaged in the practice of

law at 66-1/2 West Third Street, Winona, Minnesota, as well as serving as Municipal Judge, right up to the day of his early morning death on May 16, 1963.

He was a member of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart where the funeral services were conducted with almost the entire local bench and bar present to pay their last respects. He was also a member of the Winona County Bar Association, Third Judicial Bar Association, Minnesota State Bar Association, American Bar Association, Phi Beta Gamma Legal Fraternity, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, Improved Order of Red Men and the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

In summary, S. D. J. Bruski lived a fine life that ended far too soon. He was a friend to all who knew him. He served well whenever and wherever he was called upon to serve,

At this time the Winona County Bar Association moves that this testimonial to his services to the Bar and Community, and our great regard for him as a lawyer and judge, be spread upon the records of this Court.

Respectfully submitted, S. D. J. Bruski Memorial Committee, By S. A. Sawyer, George M. Robertson, Jr., William M. Hull.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Hull; it will be so ordered. Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. SAWYER: Your Honor, there are many other members of the local Bar who were acquainted with Judge Bruski during his lifetime and I would like to call upon them now.

Mr. STREATER: May it please the Court, when I became admitted to practice in 1941 the examination of titles was some[what] different than it is now. There are a few lawyers here who remember how difficult and how painstaking and how tedious and slow a job it was to examine an abstract and to give an opinion of title. This, of course, was caused by the fact that we did not have until 1945 the remedial legislation commonly called the first "Fifty Year Statute" annexed to the "Forty Year Statute". When I first became admitted to the Bar Mr. Abbot Sawyer handed me a big fat abstract and said "Examine this". I was hard put to know just what to do. I didn't want to tell Mr. Sawyer that I didn't know what he

meant, so I recently became slightly acquainted with Mr. Bruski and I went over to his office, and I, as a young attorney, will always remember the help that he gave to me in teaching me the principles of title examination, at a time when it was a very difficult and important job for the clients.

I found Mr. Bruski over the years to always be willing to help me and other young attorneys in title matters, particularly at which he excelled. Some of you will recall we had no title standards set by the Bar at that time, and the standards of title, in this community at least, were to a large extent determined by Mr. Bruski and by Mr. Sawyer.

That he excelled in this particular specialty of the law is shown by the fact that he was appointed Examiner by a number of government agencies on federal mortgages. He was the Examiner of Titles for this Court, appointed by Judge Finkelburg, and his appointment was continued from time to time throughout his life.

I had many contacts with Mr. Bruski in my time of practice and in this period as a lawyer and as a judge in the public service I feel that he was a great credit to this Bar and to the Community. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Streater. Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. SAWYER: Your Honor, another member of the Bar having been well acquainted with Judge Bruski during his lifetime has requested an opportunity to be heard. Mr. Harold Libera.

Mr. LIBERA: Gentlemen, in addition to the remarks of Mr. Hull and the fine memorial he gave, and Mr. Streater's comments, I would like to add a few personal comments about Judge S. D. J. Bruski and his relationships with the other attorneys and myself that he has had in this area.

When we younger men started practicing law we soon became aware, as Mr. Streater said, of the fact that "Si" Bruski was the accepted Dean of Real Estate Titles and Dean of Abstract Examiners. Judge Karl Finkelburg had recognized the thorough and precise knowledge of this man in real estate matters and had appointed him Examiner of Titles for all registered lands in Winona County. When we younger

men ran into a real estate problem that floundered us, we knew that we could go to "Si" and get a sympathetic and correct answer to our problem. His addiction to details was phenomenal, but his clients or those of us whom he was advising could be assured that his opinion on a title would stand up without fear of an action to determine adverse claims at a later date.

One other attribute of this man that I would like to comment on was his courteous, tactful, but yet firm treatment of the attorneys who appeared before him while he was Probate Judge and while he was Municipal Judge. In both of these fields Judge Bruski had had many years of active practice before assuming the Bench. When we appeared before him we knew that we had to have things right, but we also knew that if some unexpected fact arose he would accept the surprise or excusable neglect and allow an amendment without an embarrassing commentary from the Bench.

In general, it was always a pleasure and a challenge to engage in the legal profession with, for, or against "Si" Bruski, and the Bar Association of this County, District, and State has lost an able and competent lawyer and jurist.

Mr. SAWYER: Are there any other members of the Bar or persons present who would care to make a few remarks from their association with Judge Bruski? There being none, Your Honor, I believe that concludes the matter of this Memorial.

THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen. These tributes are well deserved, and I should like to add a few personal remarks.

The name of Bruski first came to my attention when I was a grade school pupil in hearing of, and reading about, the Spanish American War and the activities of Winona men in that conflict. An Army officer in one company of men from this city of Winona in that struggle was L. J. Bruski, the father of the deceased member of our local Bar whom we memorialize today. The senior Bruski, after the end of hostilities, lived the remainder of his life in Winona where he for many years faithfully and efficiently served the community as an official of the city of Winona.

I enjoyed a personal acquaintanceship and the friendship

of S. D. J. Bruski, to me "Si", for many years and until his death, the acquaintanceship before, the friendship after, he was admitted to practice law.

He rendered long years of public service as a member of the first Winona County Welfare Board which, almost solely by reason of his leadership, became one of the best organized and administered welfare boards in the State and a model for others to study and an example to emulate. The efficacy of the state welfare program was greatly enhanced by his suggestions and the example of his devotion to rendering full aid and assistance under the spirit of the law to those qualified to receive benefits.

He was the chairman of the original President's Birthday Ball committee, the forerunner of the March of Dimes.

He was a capable lawyer with highest professional standards; a patient, sincere and compassionate judge.

He had a just pride in honorable lineage and steadfast adherence to the religion of his ancestors and was strengthened with constant support of a loved and loving wife.

His rugged honesty, high character, and sincerity which were exemplified throughout his life, his devotion to duty, the high ideals of his practice as a lawyer, and his patient, studious judicial work as a Municipal and a Probate Judge should always serve as an example and inspiration to those who are to follow him in the profession he so dearly loved.

The Court Reporter is directed to transcribe his notes of these proceedings and deliver a copy thereof to the Clerk of this Court who is directed to duplicate the same on the records of the Court and send a certified copy thereof to the widow and a certified copy to the family of S. D. J. Bruski. ■

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