

GEORGE W. STRONG

May 14, 1875 – April 28, 1944

George W. Strong was born in Mifflin, Wisconsin, May 14th, 1875, moving with his family at an early age to a farm near Livingston, Wisconsin.

He passed away on Friday, April 28th, 1944, while sitting at his desk in his office in the Midland Bank Building.

George, as his friends and clients all called him, attended the rural school and the high-school at Dodgeville and Mineral Point, Wisconsin, having played on the football team at the latter school.

In the early summer of 1895, after his graduation, George left for Adrian, Minnesota, with two young men who driving out to work on their Uncle's farm; the trip took some time, as the horses were workhorses, and they camped out on the way. George worked on the farm through threshing, sometimes sleeping on the straw pile when on this job.

That fall George came to Minneapolis to live with his brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Kyle. George studied shorthand and typewriting in his spare time, a faculty which was to be of great advantage to him in later years. He obtained a position as a stenographer with Harlan P. Roberts. Mr. Roberts was one of the leading lawyers of Minneapolis at that time and especially known as an expert in title and probate law. John C. Sweet was also practicing in the same office and teaching the subject of foreclosure of mortgages at the University Law School. It is not strange that George afterwards came to specialize in the same lines of practice and to teach the subject of foreclosure of mortgages at the University.

While working in Mr. Roberts' office George attended the University of Minnesota Law School, graduating in 1898, and was thereupon admitted to the Bar of Minnesota.

While in the Law School he took notes and shorthand of the lectures and distributed them to the students.

After admission to the Bar, George practiced alone but in the same office with Mr. Roberts. They became partners in 1913 under the name of Roberts & Strong.

As before stated, George went to the University on many occasions to lecture on real estate law and the examination of titles at the Law School. It is not unusual for a group of students to come to his house to get further information on these subjects.

The firm of Roberts & Strong continued until the death of Mr. Roberts, and up to that time the name of Roberts & Strong was the oldest in Minneapolis of any law firm in point of making no change in the firm name.

After Mr. Roberts' death, George was associated with Benjamin P. Myers and Karl H. Covell under the name of Strong, Myers & Covell, and later with his son Harlan, under the name of Strong, Covell & Strong, and later Strong & Strong.

George was a very successful lawyer, but his work as a lawyer was not confined simply to his clients. As before stated, he was recognized by the bar, generally, as being one of the lawyers best acquainted with the subject of real estate and examination of titles. Many lawyers came to consult him on questions of title; to all such George gave his time and advice freely, and without charge. He was generally recognized as the "last word" on title examination.

A number of years ago the lawyers and real estate men began to question whether or not the practice in the office of the register of deeds should be changed so that the records would consist of folk photostats of the instruments filed, as had been adopted in Ramsey County, or whether the Wisconsin system of Uniform Conveyancing should be adopted. A joint committee was appointed of the Hennepin County Bar Association and the Minneapolis Real Estate Board to consider the subject. Many meetings were held to decide what should be done, especially in view of the fact that August W. Skog, at that time Register of Deeds, was much opposed to the photostat procedure. Several members of the committee, of whom George was one, went to Milwaukee to study the Wisconsin system, with a result that this system was put in the form of an Act and was enacted by the Minnesota Legislature in 1931. This law provided that a commission would be appointed to draft the Uniform Conveyancing blanks, George was appointed a member of the commission to help to draft the forms which we now use.

George was also at one time chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Hennepin County Bar Association and every two years while the Legislature

was in session drew a Bill for the Legislature in the nature of a Curative Act to cure all mistakes made by lawyers during the previous two years in the matter of drafting deeds, foreclosure notices and other like instruments. I am sure that none of these mistakes were made by George or any member of his firm but these Curative Acts were of great advantage to the Bar of Minnesota, and now that the Legislature is in session someone else will have to perform this necessary but uncompensated job.

While for many years he performed valuable services for the lawyers in Minneapolis, and in Minnesota, his work outside of his practice was not confined to such service. For sixteen years he was a Vestryman of St. John's Episcopal Church, near Lake Harriet, having served as Senior Warden, and during those sixteen years he did faithful and valuable work for his Church

He was a charter member the Lake Harriet Masonic Lodge and a member the Minneapolis Club and a Six O'Clock Club.

During World War One he was a member the Draft Board of the 13th Ward and both day and night performed the many and arduous duties which devolved upon the lawyer member of that Board.

George married Ida Bishop, Dodgeville, Wisconsin, in 1903. His widow and two sons, both of the same being in the Armed Forces of the United States; Capt. Harlan B. Strong is in Hawaii with Headquarters U. S. M. C. R., and Private First Class George W. Strong Jr., in Belgium and Germany.

In conclusion I would like to quote, with a brief change in the language, from the Honorable John W Davis, in attribute of this kind to one of his friends:

“Short is a lawyer's life and shorter still his fame. Sooner or later oblivion awaits us all. As those who stand in the shadow in its shadow, we owe it to ourselves and to posterity to make lasting record of worthy men that they may live on without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives. None better deserves such honor at our hands and George W. Strong. It is right him down a learned an able lawyer, arise and prudent counselor, a patriot and loyal citizen, a gentleman “unafraid.”

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Related Memorial

“Harlan P. Roberts (1854-1925)” (MLHP, 2020).

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For years the firm of Roberts & Strong placed the following advertisement in *Hubbell's Law Directory*:¹

HARLAN P. ROBERTS.

GEORGE W. STRONG.

ROBERTS & STRONG,

Lawyers,

600-612 Security Building, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

**Corporation, Real Estate and Probate Law. Examination of Titles.
Foreclosure of Mortgages.**

**Attorneys for: Tri-State Telephone & Telegraph Company, Hennepin County
Savings Bank, and David C. Bell Investment Company, American
State Bank, and Associated Mortgage Investors.**

REFER TO: Any Bank or Trust Co.

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Posted MLHP: January 1, 2021.

¹ *Hubbell's Legal Directory for Lawyer and Businessmen*, Appendix, at 252 (1924) (enlarged).