

In Memoriam

Judge Edward Thelen

April 13, 1889 - April 6, 1956

**Washington County Bar Association
District Court
Nineteenth Judicial District
Stillwater, Minnesota**

June 12, 1956

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF WASHINGTON

DISTRICT COURT
NINETEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

In the matter of Memorial Services
For the late Edward Thelen of the
Washington County Bar

General Term - June 12, 1956

TO THE ABOVE NAMED COURT:

Pursuant to the order of the Court made and entered on May 8, 1956, we submit the following Memorial in honor of the late Edward Thelen of the Washington County Bar.

Edward Thelan was born on a farm, near Holton, Wisconsin, on April 13, 1889, the son of John W. and Hermina Thelen, early settlers in St. Croix County, Wisconsin. Judge Thelen attended public schools in the City of Stillwater and graduated from the Stillwater High School in 1907. He attended the University of Minnesota from 1907 to 1911; he then attended the St. Paul College of Law from which he graduated in 1913. He was admitted to the Bar of Minnesota 1913 and for two years thereafter was an Editor for the West Publishing Company of St. Paul. The following two years he practiced law at Great Falls, Montana, in association with his brother, John Thelen. He returned to Stillwater in 1917 and engaged in the practice of law until 1930, when he was appointed Judge of the Probate Court of Washington County, Minnesota. He continued as such Probate Judge and as Juvenile Judge until his death, having been elected to that position without opposition each time his term expired.

On June 28, 1922, Judge Thelen married Miss Reta Shepard. She and two children survive him, Mrs. Bruce Nagle and Edward S.

Thelen. Mrs. Nagle lives with her mother here in Stillwater, while her husband is serving in the Army. Edward S. Thelen is in the Army Air Force, stationed in Chicago.

Judge Thelen served in the army in World War I and for many years was active in the American Legion. His other interests included conservation practices and St. Croix River improvement. He was a leader in the St. Croix River Improvement Association and was a past officer of the Washington County Historical Society.

As Juvenile Court Judge, Mr. Thelen was called upon to handle numerous juvenile delinquency cases and his experiences with these young people prompted his deep interest in movements to check delinquency. One of his last actions in this field was to join with County Attorney W. T. Johnson in a request to law enforcement officers to keep parents of erring youngsters informed of their misbehavior when it starts so that they might be prevented from more serious indiscretions later.

Judge Thelen was a past president of the Minnesota Probate Judges Association and also served as chairman of its legislative committee which sought passage of an amendment to the state constitution defining more strictly the qualifications and authority of probate judges. For several years Judge Thelen had been called on to represent the probate judges at Boys State at the Minnesota fair grounds at which he explained the work of his office.

Judge Thelen died at his home of a heart attack, following a brief illness on April 6, 1956. Funeral services were held at the First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater, with Rev. Paul F. Smith officiating, on April 9, 1956, with burial in Fairview Cemetery. District Judges, Carl W. Gustafson and Rollin G. Johnson, Wm. T. Johnson, County Attorney Dewey Kelson, County Assessor; members of the

Minnesota Probate Judges Association and of the Washington County Bar Association were honorary pallbearers. The active bearers were all county officials who long had been associated with Judge Thelen at the Court House. They were Roy F. Johnson, County attorney auditor; W. P. Hart, treasurer; Edward Simonet, register of deeds; Ruben G. Peterson, clerk of the district court; Ruben Granquist, sheriff, and John Merton, highway engineer.

Judge Thelen was a friendly man, highly regarded by all who knew him. He was an able and conscientious judge. The lawyers who practiced in his Court were always treated courteously. He was at all times ready and willing to assist and give advice to younger members of the Bar, who practiced in his court.

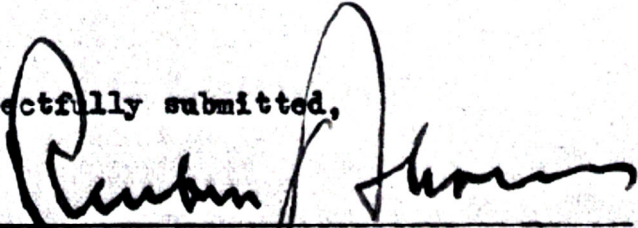
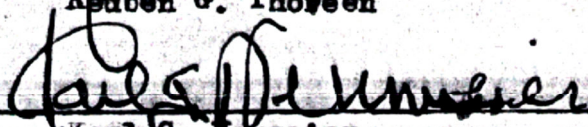

Judge Thelen will long be remembered for his many contributions to the welfare and development of this community. He originated the idea of tree planting by Washington County school children, an idea later adopted by the American Legion as part of its State Conservation program. He was a member of and took an active part in the Washington County, Nineteenth Judicial District and Minnesota State Bar Associations. He took an active part in the drafting and passage of the Probate Code. His particular interest, however, was in the youth of the community. We understand that the Youth Center, which has been established in the City of Stillwater by the St. Croix Valley Youth Commission, will be named in honor and memory of Judge Thelen. This will be a lasting tribute to his memory.

We are glad to inform the Court that the Washington County Bar Association and the Nineteenth Judicial District Bar Association have together made a contribution "In Memoriam" of over \$100.00 to the Minnesota State Bar Foundation in Judge Thelen's honor

and memory. His name will be permanently inscribed in the "In Memoriam" book of the Minnesota State Bar Foundation.

We, of this committee, have been friends and associates of Judge Thelen for more than fifty years. We graduated from the Stillwater High School with him in 1907. Five members of said class of 1907 became lawyers—Judge Thelen, the three members of this committee and Hon. Gerhard Bundlie of St. Paul. We all started practicing law about the same time and have been close and personal friends of Judge Thelen during the years. We hereby pay tribute to his memory.

We move that this Memorial be filed as a permanent record of this Court; that a certified copy of the same be sent to Mrs. Thelen and a copy be given to the public press.

Respectfully submitted,

Reuben G. Thoveen

Karl G. Neumeier

P. Milton Lindbloom

For Judge Thelen's recollections of his family, written in December 1953, see "So, you would like to know about your grandparents."
<http://ed-thelen.org/PaternalGrandparents.html>