

THOMAS C. DAGGETT

(August 12, 1879 – February 23, 1940)

After graduating from the University of Minnesota School of Law in 1900, Thomas C. Daggett immediately set up practice in St. Paul. He was ambitious, independent and within a decade had built a fine reputation, as attested by the following portrait in Henry Castle's *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*, published in 1912:

THOMAS C. DAGGETT. Among the prominent young members of the St. Paul bar is Thomas C. Daggett, who has attained a deservedly high place for ability and integrity in his profession. A self-made man of the cleanest type, his legal successes have already been abundant and the future opens bright before him. He is particularly well-grounded in the laws pertaining to labor organization and was instrumental in establishing precedents defining their status. He began his legal career in 1900.

Mr. Daggett is a native of Wisconsin, his birth having occurred at Darlington, August 12, 1879. He is of Irish descent, his father, James Daggett, having been a native of Erin. He came to America when a young man and located on a farm near Darlington, where for a few years he devoted his life to the great basic industry. During the gold excitement he removed to Colorado and shortly thereafter met with a tragic death, being killed with two others in a mine accident caused by accumulation of mine gases. He bravely offered to go down in the basket to rescue the two others and himself met with death as a result. The date of this lamentable event was June, 1893. The mother, whose maiden name was Mary Gallagan, was born in Wisconsin, August 1, 1860, and later resided in Minnesota. The mother and the maternal grandmother,

with the fatherless family removed to Minnesota in 1895 and the subject's early schooling, was obtained in the schools of Elysian, his attendance continuing until the age of fourteen years.

Mr. Daggett is for the most part self-educated. After leaving the public school he pursued his studies for a time under private tutors and during this private instruction he earned the money to defray its expenses by teaching in the local schools. At the age of eighteen years he entered the University of Minnesota and entered upon his preparation for the practice of the law. He received his degree in 1900 and in October of that year came to St. Paul, of whose advancement and opportunity he had heard much, and opened a law office. He was for a short period secretary to Dr. Justice O. Hage, at that time health commissioner, his connection with the health department lasting for about four months. In February, 1901, he began the practice of the law and in the fall of that year he formed a partnership with Kay Todd, the firm being known under the caption of Daggett & Todd, an association which continued until August, 1905. At the date mentioned the partnership was dissolved and since then Mr. Daggett has practiced alone, engaging in general practice. His offices are maintained at 916-918, the New York Life Insurance Building. He began his career as a legislator in a small way and has met with recognition and the best of fortunes, being one of the leading young attorneys of the city.

Mr. Daggett was formerly much interested in affairs military, serving as lieutenant in command of Battery A, of St. Paul up to 1909, when he resigned. He is independent in politics, possessing that broad-mindedness which makes it impossible for him to esteem above mere partisanship, the better principle and the man most likely to serve the interests of the people. Until about four years ago Mr. Daggett was active in campaign work, being ever

ready to do anything, to go anywhere in support of the cause in which he was enlisted, but recently he has devoted his time and attention to his practice. His religious faith is that of the Catholic church. His fraternal affiliations extend to the Knights of Columbus, the Ancient order of Hibernians, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Commercial Club, the Nushka Club, and he is an honorary member of the Greek letter fraternity, Alpha Kappa Phi. The Ramsey County, the State and the American Bar Association also claim his membership. Of the former he has been a member of the executive committee and chairman of several committees. In 1910-11 he was a member of its legislative committee.

On June 21, 1905, Mr. Daggett was united in marriage in St. Paul to Ursula Kelly, daughter of Daniel Kelly, a pioneer resident of the city and at present a member of the board of control. They share their happy home with one daughter, Mary, born October 16, 1906, in this city.

Reverting to Mr. Daggett's ancestry, we find that the founder of the maternal line of his family also came from Ireland. His grandfather, Patrick Gallagan, was a member of the Wisconsin Legislature and for a decade served as judge of the probate court of Le Sueur county, Minnesota.¹

By the mid-1920s, his reputation within the legal community was so well established that he was elected president of the Ramsey County Bar Association in 1925 and the Minnesota State Bar Association in 1928.²

¹ Henry A. Castle, III *History of St. Paul and Vicinity 1071-3* (Lewis Pub. Co., 1912).

² See "Presidents of the Minnesota State Bar Association, 1901 -2012" (MLHP, 2009). Unlike most predecessors, he did not give a presidential address at the state convention held on July 11-12, 1929, at Breezy Point. In his opening remarks, he joked, "The time allotted to m on the program was from 9:30 to 9:45, so my time having elapsed, I am assuming I am excused from giving a formal address." *Proceedings of the State Bar Association for 1929*.

Daggett died on Friday, February 23, 1940. The *St. Paul Dispatch* carried the story under a banner headline:

Thomas C. Daggett, 62, Dies

Practiced Law Here 40 Years

Thos. C. Daggett, St. Paul attorney for the past 40 years, died this morning at St. Joseph's hospital after a long illness. Mr. Daggett was past president of the Ramsey County Bar association and the Minnesota State Bar association. He served fifteen years as a member of the board of governors of the state association.

Born in Darlington, Wis., August 12, 1878, he moved with his parents to Elysian, Minn., in 1885. He later attended the University of Minnesota, receiving his law degree there in 1900. He opened a law office in St. Paul and formed a partnership with Kay Todd under the firm name of Daggett & Todd which continued until 1905.

Thereafter he practiced alone until 1926 when his present partnership with Clinton W. Redlund was formed under the firm name of Daggett & Redlund. He was president of the county bar association in 1925 and the state bar association in 1928.

June 21, 1905, Mr. Daggett was married to Ursula Kelly, daughter of Daniel Kelly, who was a pioneer resident here. Mrs. Daggett died in 1931.

Although Mr. Daggett was actively interested in politics during his career, having been a close advisor of the late

He is not listed in "Presidents of the Ramsey County Bar Association, 1926-2012" (MLHP, 2008) because his term began before the current list maintained by that organization starts.

Governor Floyd B. Olson, he chose not to accept public office.

Mr. Daggett is survived by his daughter, Mrs. Cyril C. Sheehan of St. Paul, a sister, Mrs. W. K. Wilcox of Elysian, Minn. Funeral services will be from the family home at 1045 Portland avenue at 8:30 A.M. Monday with requiem mass at St. Luke's Catholic church at 9. Burial will be in Calvary cemetery.³

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³ *St. Paul Dispatch*, February 23, 1940, at 17. A photo accompanied the obituary.