

In Memory of

William W. Watson

[July 16, 1911 – June 16, 1944]

**Annual Memorial Services
Hennepin County Bar Association
District Court
February 24, 1945**

William Wallace Watson

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Among those whom we honor today is a young man who left a career of unusual promise at the bar to serve in the Armed Forces of his country, and met his death in the course of that service.

William W. Watson was born July 16, 1911 in Fenchow, China, where his parents were medical missionaries. When he was sixteen years old he came to Northfield, Minnesota, where he completed his high school course, and in 1933 graduated from Carleton College with high scholastic honors. After receiving his degree from the Harvard Law School in 1936, he returned to Minneapolis, and was admitted to the bar in the fall of that year. In February, 1937, he became associated with the firm of Stinchfield, Mackall, Crouse and Moore, and continued practicing law with them until January, 1940, when he was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General of Minnesota.

When war was declared he offered his services to his country, believing that his knowledge of the Chinese language might be useful in connection with activities in the Far East. In 1942 he was commissioned Lieutenant Junior Grade, in the United States Naval Reserve, Intelligence Department, and was assigned to the District Intelligence Office at Chicago. In the fall of 1943, after his promotion to Lieutenant Senior Grade, he was assigned to Allied Headquarters at New Delhi, India, from which point his duties took him to China by way of the dangerous air route known as "The Hump." In April, 1944, he returned to this country as a Naval Courier, spending

some time in Washington, and visiting Minneapolis in May. Upon his return he was assigned to duty and Chunking, as Assistant Naval Attaché at the American Embassy, and met his death when the plane taking him to his new assignment was forced to make an emergency landing in a rice field, almost at the end of the journey.

Lieutenant Watson was married in 1940 to Miss Jean Goodrich of Minneapolis. Their son, William W. Watson, Jr., was born during his absence in India, and is now one year old. Mrs. Watson continues to make her home here.

Lieutenant Watson's outstanding legal ability was recognized by associates and adversaries alike, and he appeared as counsel in a number of important cases. He was the author of a learned article on Allocation of Corporate Income for Taxation, published in the Minnesota Law Review in June, 1941, which received favorable comment throughout the country, and stands an example of his painstaking and thorough analysis of a legal problem. Combined with an unusually fine legal mind was the most pleasant of personalities. All of us remember his ready smile. A natural ability for public speaking was recognized by the demands upon him to appear in support of civic projects, and to act as presiding officer of public meetings. Everyone who knew him not only respected him, but liked him; not only liked him, but respected him. He was outstanding as a lawyer, a public official, and an upright citizen of the highest character. The legal profession is suffered a great loss, and his friends and associates at the bar miss him in a way that words cannot express.

Among the messages received after his death was one from H. H. Kung, Chinese Minister of Finance, who said in part, "He gave his life for the country of his birth." We know that he gave his life, not only for the country of his birth, but also for the country whose uniform he wore, for all of us who have stayed safely at home, and for a cause which transcends all national boundaries. This Association joins in honoring his memory, and in a steadfast resolution that his death, and the death of other young men in the same cause, will not be in vain.

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The Minneapolis Morning Tribune, July 1, 1944, at 2:

Former State Legal Aid Dies in Action

Navy Lt. William W. Watson, former assistant Minnesota attorney general, was killed in a plane crash between Calcutta and Chungking, his wife, who lives at 3601 Sixth street N., was informed Friday by the navy.



Watson, son of Dr. and Mrs. Percy T. Watson of Northfield, entered the service in February, 1942, after

two years in Attorney General J. A. A. Burnquist's office. He was graduated from Carleton college and Harvard law school.

He was born in China while his father was head of an American hospital there.