

## MEMORIAL

ANSEL J. CHAPMAN

IOWA JUDGES ASSOCIATION – JUNE 22, 2005

Judge Ansel J. Chapman died on May 4, 2005, three days after his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Judge Chapman is survived by his wife, Corinne. She and Ansel celebrated their 59<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Ansel is also survived by his three children: Nathan of Pine Mountain Valley, Georgia; Kathryn Keller of Leawood, Kansas; Barbara Siemann of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Judge Chapman was born in Des Moines. He lived in Iowa City most all of his life. In 1932 he graduated from Iowa City High School, and in 1936 he received his undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa. He attended Yale Law School and, following graduation in 1939, went into the practice of law with John O. Senneff in Mason City. Shortly thereafter, he was called to active duty as an Army Reserve Officer. Following a medical discharge in 1941, he returned to Iowa City where he managed the family movie theater business for many years. Judge Chapman practiced law with Bill Meardon and Bill Sueppel until 1968, when he was appointed to the district court by Governor Harold Hughes. He retired from the Bench in 1985, but continued to serve as a senior judge for several years thereafter.

Throughout his life, Judge Chapman was an active and valued civic leader. He served as Iowa City police judge. He was elected to, and served as, President of the Iowa City School Board. He was a member of the Mercy Hospital Board and Agudas Achim Synagogue. Judge Chapman served as President of Johnson County Lung Association. The Iowa City Chamber of Commerce honored him with its Outstanding Community Service Award.

Ansel Chapman was destined to become a judge. He was a scholar, intellect, mentor, father figure, and student of the law. He loved to research, reason, and resolve important legal issues. Throughout his tenure as a judge, he stayed abreast of current appellate decisions, both state and federal, and kept a valued and ever annotated notebook to assist him. All of us in the 6<sup>th</sup> District had the experience of discussing pending legal matters with Judge Chapman, only to have him later call with controlling case authority or leave a Northwestern Reporter tabbed at a decisive decision on our desk.

Judge Chapman's judicial career was marked by many achievements and deserved honors. He served for years on the Bar Association's Jury Instruction Committee. He taught Trial Practice at the University of Iowa Law School as an Adjunct Professor. The Iowa Trial Lawyers Association honored him with its Judicial Achievement Award. Many of you will recall the appellate opinions he regularly reported to this association. His presentations were done with panache and a welcome empathy for the trial court. Perhaps most telling is the fact he was the first recipient of the Iowa Judges Association's Award of Merit. I fondly refer to this prestigious award as "The Chapman".

Judge Chapman was a lawyer's judge and a judge's judge. His opinions were always thoroughly researched, thoughtfully considered, and beautifully written. It was a rare occasion when he was reversed.

Those of us who served with him on the Bench will always treasure his friendship and wise counsel. As a cherished friend and brilliant judge, he cannot be replaced. A veritable giant of our profession has left us. But because of Ansel Chapman's contributions and unimpeachable integrity, the Iowa judiciary is a better and more highly respected institution. Judges like Ansel Chapman come along all too seldom. He will be missed.