

Memorial Resolution

JAMES P. KELLEY

James P. Kelley was born in Le Mars, Iowa, on April 25, 1910, the son of James E. and Charlotte (Pearce) Kelley. After his preparatory education at Le Mars High School, he attended Creighton University at Omaha, NE, and completed his undergraduate work at the University of Iowa, receiving his bachelor of arts degree in 1931. In 1934 he received the degree of Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa Law School. After being admitted to the bar he commenced the general practice of law at Le Mars in 1934 and was a partner with J.T. Keenan until Mr. Keenan's death in 1946. Judge Kelley continued in the practice till his appointment to the bench, serving inter alia, as city attorney for Le Mars from 1946 to 1962.

In August 1962, Judge Lampman resigned and Republican Governor Norman Erbe selected Judge Kelley, a well known Democrat, as his replacement. The present system of judicial selection was not yet in place, and the judicial nominating commissions were not set up till 1963. Judge Kelley went to Des Moines and the Governor appointed him and he was sworn in by the Governor on August 29, 1962.

Judge Kelley served as a District Court Judge for the 21st Judicial District from 1962 till July 1, 1967, when the 21st District was abolished. He continued as a judge of the 18th Judicial District and when chief judges for judicial districts were instituted, Judge Kelley was named as Chief Judge for the 18th District. He was the only Chief Judge the 18th District ever had. On January 1, 1972, what is the Third Judicial District was created and Judge Kelley served as chief judge thereof until April 25, 1985, when he retired, having reached the mandatory retirement age of 75.

Judge Kelly married Helen Margaret Reidy at Akron, Iowa, on

June 12, 1940, and six children were born to them: James, John, Nora, Michael, Mary and Ann. Mrs. Kelley died October 9, 1983, Judge Kelley died at Sioux City on November 30, 1995.

Judge Kelley was a member of St. James Catholic Church in Le Mars. He was a past president of the Lions Club of Le Mars, served as Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, past president of Plymouth County Tuberculosis Association, trustee of the Le Mars Public Library and former president of the Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults. He served as chairman of the Building Committee for Camp Sunnyside. He was also a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the American Legion. During World War, he was a lieutenant in the Navy, serving with the Atlantic Fleet on the U.S.S. Savannah. He was an enthusiastic fisherman and had a keen interest in sports. His attendance and role at the Drake Relays were legendary.

Judge Kelley is survived by his children and their spouses: James and his wife Carol of Lincoln, Nebr.; John of Madison, Wis.; Nora and her husband Frederick of Rapid City, S.D.; Michael and his wife Jennifer of Miami, Fla.; Mary and her husband Michael of Dubuque, Iowa; and Ann and her husband Vijayan of Denton, Texas. He is also survived by seven grandchildren and by his sister Kathleen Lentz of Le Mars.

Besides his wife, he was preceded in death by his brother Robert.

Funeral services were on December 4, 1995, at St. James Catholic Church with interment in Calvary Cemetery, Le Mars.

Judge Kelley was an able and conscientious jurist and his contributions to his community and his state and the bar and bench of Iowa entitle him to the grateful remembrance of all whose lives he touched.

Therefore be it resolved that this Resolution be made a part of the permanent records of the Iowa Judges Association and a copy be sent to this family.