

JOSEPH C. KEEFE MEMORIAL

Joseph Campbell Keefe was born September 26, 1926, in Charles City, IA, to Thomas and Mary Virginia Campbell Keefe. Following his graduation from Charles City High School in 1944, he joined the U.S. Navy. During WWII, he was stationed in Hawaii, where he served as a radio man.

Following the war, Joe attended Loras College in Dubuque for one year. He then transferred to the University of Iowa. He married his sweetheart, Illola (Lola) Flater on July 17, 1948, at the University of Iowa Student Center Rectory. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 1950. He went on to attend law school at the University of Iowa, graduating with a Juris Doctorate Degree in 1952.

After law school, Joe became an insurance adjustor for State Farm Insurance, working first in Carroll, IA., and then Clear Lake, IA.

In 1955, Joe joined Isadore Meyer in the practice of law in Decorah, IA. Joe practiced law for 10 years with Isadore in the firm of Meyer and Keefe.

In 1965, Joe applied to fill a judicial vacancy in the old 13th Judicial District-which consisted of the counties of Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek. On July 1, 1965 Governor Harold Hughes appointed Joe to the District court bench.

Joe enjoyed tough cases and did not mind if they were also high profile cases. He was involved in litigation surrounding the Wadena Rock Fest. He was the first judge in Iowa to be confronted with the presence of cameras in the courtroom. This occurred during the double murder trial of Michael Moses in Waterloo in 1979. Following the trial, Joe shared his experiences and frequently spoke publicly on the presence of media in the courtroom. He provided input into the development of the regulation of media in the courts.

Joe was a gregarious individual. People remembered him wherever he went. While working in Waterloo, he usually stayed at the Heartland Inn. He spent so much time there, they put a plaque over the door of his corner non-smoking room and called it "THE JUDGE JOSEPH C.KEEFE ROOM". They always put the newest recliner in his room.

Joe taught classes at Luther College in Decorah . He also traveled around the country instructing newly appointed judges on how to carry out their responsibilities. Besides assisting new Judges, he served as a mentor for many new attorneys in northeast Iowa.

Joe was president of this association from 1972 through 1973. He received the association's highest honor, the Award of Merit, in 1989.

Joe retired from the district court bench at the end of 1991. He then served as a senior judge, assisting in the first judicial district and on the court of appeals, until 2004.

Joe was an active member of St Benedict Catholic Church in Decorah, IA, serving as a lector and Eucharistic minister. He was actively involved in the Decorah community, chairing the local chapter of the American Cancer Society, working at the city's library, delivering meals on wheels.

Joe passed away Monday, August 3, 2009, at the age of 82. He was survived by his wife of 61 years, Lola, and daughters Kathryn Davis and Mary Grove, as well as two grandsons, and a brother.

I move this Memorial be approved unanimously and be spread upon the records of the Iowa Judges' Association. A copy shall be provided to Judge Keefe's family.