



## Charles Kennedy

April 13, 1913 - May 10, 2003

Retired District Judge, Charles W. Kennedy, 90, passed away on May 10th at Fair Oaks Lodge in Wadena. Judge Kennedy was born on April 13, 1913 to Grace Dunlop Kennedy and Charles Garfield Kennedy in Presho, South Dakota. As a youth, he attended school in Pukwana, South Dakota, where the family resided on a farm, and eventually the family took up residence in Deadwood, South Dakota. While attending high school, Judge Kennedy became an excellent typist and won contests, at both the County, District, Regional and State level, on an old LC Smith typewriter. He also developed the ability to write in shorthand and became very adept at that as well. All of this enabled him to be employed as a high school senior at the First National Bank in Deadwood. Judge Kennedy graduated from Deadwood High School in 1929. He entered the University of Minnesota in 1931, where he intended to go to law school. He met and married his wife of 66 years, Sigrid Rempel, on March 6, 1937. He continued his studies at the University of Minnesota where he graduated with a law degree in 1936. Charles and Sigrid moved to Wadena where he began his law practice. In 1941, he was drafted into the Navy and took training in Boston, Massachusetts. He was a Lieutenant JG and was assigned to duty as a Communications Officer on the island of Guam in the South Pacific. While serving there in 1945 he was the first person to decode the message that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. At the war's end, he served briefly as Attorney General on the island of Samoa. Upon completing his military service he returned to Wadena to continue his law

practice. He served as both City Attorney for Wadena and was eventually elected as County Attorney as well. He was a tireless and well prepared trial lawyer. He would often enjoy presenting his cases to the family, asking them for their views and reactions to his arguments. After more than two decades on one side of the Bench, Judge Kennedy was appointed in 1962 to be District Judge of the Seventh Judicial District. His appointment was by Governor C. Elmer Anderson after a plebescite held in the Seventh District. While on the District Bench he held court in the various counties of the ten county District, from St. Cloud on the eastern end to Moorhead on the west. While on the District Bench he served for a short time as a visiting Justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court. Judge Kennedy served on the bench until mandatory retirement in 1983. Upon retiring from the Bench he returned to the practice of law Of Counsel with the law firm of Kennedy & Nervig, LLP until 1998. From 1998 on, his wife Sigrid, being a resident at Fair Oaks, he became completely devoted to her attention and retired completely from the practice of law. Judge Kennedy loved his wife, Sigrid, and his family, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He loved the law and was a true scholar in the pursuit of knowledge. Whether it was a District Court decision, a Supreme Court decision, or a brief writing, he was a master at brevity and clarity. As a youth, living in South Dakota, he developed a deep love for horses and was always fond of and looked forward to the Kentucky Derby. He loved crossword puzzles, was an avid reader of poetry, books, Shakespeare and the Bible. He will be missed by his family who loved him dearly and those whose lives he touched. Judge Charles W. Kennedy is survived by his wife, Sigrid; sons Charles R. and wife Lois of Wadena, John B. and wife Polly of Westport, Connecticut; daughter Patricia G. Kennedy of New York City, New York; three grandsons Charles R. Jr. and wife Kelly of Stillwater, Douglas C. and wife Roxanne of Eden Prairie, Steven J. and wife Anne of Richfield; granddaughters Kate Kennedy of Carlton College, Nora Kennedy of Westport, Connecticut and Christa P. Johnson of Victoria, Minnesota; four great-grandchildren Maddy, Chloe, Parker and Max Kennedy. Interment will take

place in the Wadena Cemetery.

# Tribute Wall

SK

“ He was a great man and I am very honored and pleased to have been able to call him my Grandfather. His humor will be greatly missed.

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**Steve Kennedy** - May 10, 2003 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ There are a couple of stories I want to share with the family: Our living room windows face the Kennedy home. My mother, Amanda, a friend of Sigrid's, knew the judge as a private and (she thought) somewhat reserved man. It gave her no end of delight when she observed him arriving home from a day on the bench, stepping from his car and swooping up his cat to give it a big kiss before going in to spend the evening.

The other story involves a case he ruled on. A young boy in Little Falls used a power wheelchair full-time. He wanted to play with his friends outside in the only place they had to play, the street, since there were no sidewalks in the area. Many people wanted to prevent the boy from using the edge of the street. (this was in the early 70s, I think, when disabled people were striving for civil rights, a chance to participate fully in society). Judge Kennedy ruled in favor of the boy.

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**Mary Ellen Kennedy Kollodge** - May 10, 2003 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ i am sorry to hear of the passing of your father charlie.. i read his obit.. i didn't know he was from so. dak.. what an interesting life.. we are having a surprise birthday party for ann's 65 on friday.. her birthday is really on saturday..

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**skip and ann pederson** - May 10, 2003 at 12:00 AM