

IN MEMORIAM

DAVID HADLEY FLETT.

September 12, 1846---May 25, 1926.

May It Please the Courts of Racine County and your Honors,
the Presiding Judges thereof:

On behalf of the Racine County Bar Association, the undersigned
committee, appointed for that purpose, present the following

RESOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS, an allwise Providence has removed from our midst our
esteemed friend and brother, the HON. DAVID HADLEY FLETT, first
presiding judge of the Municipal Court of Racine County, one-time
President of Racine County Bar Association, and most venerable
member of our bar, and one whose life has been prominently identified
with the history of Racine City and County for more than forty years;
and

WHEREAS, his able and faithful public service in all the important
trusts to which he was called, his devotion to the interests en-
trusted to his care, the ability and integrity which he manifested
throughout his professional career, his unostentatious charities and
benevolence, and the uniform kindness and courtesy which characterized
him in all the relations of life, endeared him to a large circle of
friends, to his clients, to the profession and to the community, by
all of whom he is justly held in lasting remembrance. His many
excellent traits of character, presented through a long, useful and
honorable life, rendered him one of our most distinguished and re-
spected citizens. The bench and bar, in common with the whole com-
munity, deeply deplore his loss, and join, with profound respect and
regret, in paying their last tribute to his memory; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That in the death of our brother, HON. DAVID HADLEY
FLETT, our city has been deprived of one of its most useful and
honored citizens, and the profession of one of its oldest and most
trustworthy members.

RESOLVED, That as a testimonial of our high appreciation of
his life and character, and of his many virtues as a judge, a lawyer.

citizen and friend, these resolutions be presented to the County, Municipal and Circuit Courts for Racine County, with the request they be entered upon their records; also that a copy hereof be entered upon the minutes of our association.

RESOLVED, That we tender to the friends and family of the deceased, our sincere condolence and sympathy in their great affliction; and that the secretary of our association transmit to the family of the deceased a copy of these resolutions.

JOHN B. SIMMONS

THOMAS M. KEARNEY

WALTER C. PALMER

ELBERT B. HAND

WILLIAM D. THOMPSON

Committee of Racine County
Bar Association.

In support of the foregoing, we present the following brief sketch of the life and character of our departed brother.

DAVID HADLEY FLETT was

Born September 12, 1846, at Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, Scotland. He was the oldest of nine boys, three of whom are still living. In September, 1855, he sailed from Edinburgh with his parents and came to Somers, ^{Kenosha County,} Wisconsin. A farm two and one-half miles from there was purchased and he lived there until he was nineteen, going to the district school during the winters. He attended the Racine High School during the winter terms of 1861 and 1862.

From 1863 until 1869, Mr. Flett taught in the district schools in Kenosha County during the winter terms and for one summer term. In the summer of 1869, in partnership with another man, he purchased a threshing machine and went out to Iowa near Independence, where they went from farm to farm. While engaged in this work, he lost part of three fingers of his right hand.

In 1870, he entered Oberlin College, from which he graduated in 1875. He was a profound Latin scholar, well versed in the language and literature of that race of empire builders. In his sophomore

year he was appointed tutor in Latin, an honor, since students were not generally given this position until the junior year. He taught that language for three years and was also offered a permanent position as assistant tutor, which he refused. In his junior year, he was elected by unanimous vote of the class to give the Latin oration for the "Junior Exhibition". At this time the long vacation was in the winter, so that he was able to teach in district schools during the winter terms.

In 1875, he was chosen Superintendent of Schools for Kenosha County, a position he held for two years. From 1877 to 1879, he was Principal of the Elkhorn High School.

The school year of 1879-1880, he attended the Wisconsin State University Law School, where he performed two years' work in one, with the result that, by unanimous vote of the faculty, he was given the special privilege of graduating at the end of the one year instead of the required two years.

After graduation, Judge Flett came to Racine and opened an office for the practice of law, and on August 30, 1882, married Louise Townsend of Elkhorn, who died January 8, 1920, leaving four daughters.

For several years he was in partnership in practice with Judge Elbert O. Hand.

In 1887, he was elected by the Racine Common Council City Attorney, and held the position four years. In 1897, he was elected Municipal Judge and served until January, 1902. Although he could no doubt have been re-elected, he refused to run, preferring not to engage in a scramble for that office. During the years 1880 to 1897, he was Court Commissioner. He was a member of the School Board in 1896-1897.

From 1909 to 1915, he was a Trustee on the Racine County Insane Asylum Board, and in his administration of its affairs he gave the same care and attention he always bestowed upon his own most important concerns. In 1912, he also acted as Trustee on the Taylor Orphan Asylum Board. He was also a Trustee of the Y.M.C.A. for several years.

He was President of the Racine County Bar Association for

the years 1921 and 1922. He was also a director of the Manufacturers National Bank for about twelve years, the greater portion of the time being Vice President and its attorney and counsel.

In 1923-1924, he was Chairman of the Budget Committee of the Community Welfare League.

Subsequent to graduation from Oberlin, a national chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was founded in connection with the college. In the meantime the records of the college had been destroyed by fire, and in order to ascertain who were entitled to receive this degree a questionnaire was sent out to the living members of each class and consensus of opinion of the members of the several classes was secured. Under the plan, in connection with two others of the class of 1875, Judge Flett received the coveted honor.

In April, 1926, Judge Flett fell and broke his left hip, and died on May 25, 1926.

During his active career, estates and trusts aggregating many hundreds of thousands of dollars passed under his stewardship. His service charges were extremely moderate. Had his efforts been on the material side of our profession, he could have accumulated a great fortune.

Many who were not familiar with investments and the management of finances and property entrusted their entire estates to Judge Flett. His care, skill and foresight are evidenced by the fact, as we believe the fact is, that none of his clients ever lost a dollar of either principal or interest, and he never had to make up losses, because no losses ever accrued.

In the death of his wife, January 8, 1920, Judge Flett sustained his most severe loss. She was an ideal helpmeet in his early struggles, easing his cares with true wifely devotion. She reared four daughters in the ways of rectitude and right living, - of whom any parent may well be proud.

When Judge Flett received the injury which incapacitated him from further service and attention to duty, his books and accounts

were so kept as to be readily understandable; and while he could give but little information, advice or direction during his last illness, there was but slight, if any, occasion to call for such.

During the three or four years prior to his death, Judge Flett adjusted his temporal affairs. He had long passed three score and ten. He was at peace with the world. His soul was at rest. He had nothing to look back upon with regret. He was ready for the end, and awaited with calmness and confidence the final summons.

Judge Flett gave a large part of his earnings and estate to charity. There was no ostentation or display here. He frequently stated to those who enjoyed his confidence that it were better to give what could be given while alive and able to see to its proper application where the most good would follow, than risk having it dissipated in less beneficent objects after death.

As a lawyer he was studious. As an adviser, he was careful and accurate. During the four years he presided over our Municipal Court, he was laborious, impartial, incorruptible, patient and kind. Always self-restrained, never giving or unduly resenting offense, and possessed of that unaffected gentility resulting from the mingling of self-respect with respect and kindness for other. He was the ideal solicitor and counselor of whom we read. He combined his knowledge of the law with sound business principles and approved practice in the administration of the business and affairs of his clients. His sterling qualities and unimpeachable honesty won his way into the hearts of all.

He was not a genius, but was amply endowed with saving grace and sober common sense, which gained and held the esteem and confidence of his clients, his brethren and at the bar and the public.

He was a firm and consistent Christian, a moral example, with a character abounding in lines of beauty, and showing scarcely a blemish or defect. Nowhere exaggerated, but everywhere strong. A good and true friend and a man of great integrity.

In his ending there was a touch of martyrdom. He has left a

beautiful memory, and the record of a life which is an inspiration, and may well be imitated by all of us.

We cannot say that we ne'er shall see his like again. It is the characteristic of our profession in the processes of human evolution to produce such as he, to lend dignity to our calling and fortify it and its members in the confidence of the community.

Therefore, in tribute and remembrance of our departed brother, we pray that the foregoing resolutions and memorial be received and spread upon the records of our respective courts.

Racine, Wisconsin, November 15, 1926.

JOHN B. SIMMONS

THOMAS M. KEARNEY

WALTER C. PALMER

ELBERT B. HAND

WILLIAM D. THOMPSON

Committee of Racine County
Bar Association.