

Memorial presented to the Courts by Elbert B. Hand
on the occasion of Memorial Exercises held for the
late Hon. David H. Flett on the 15th of November,
1926.

"The noiseless foot of Time steals swiftly by,
And ere we dream of manhood, age is nigh."

It seems such a little while ago that at the age of twenty, upon graduating from the University of Wisconsin, I entered the law office of Hand & Flett, to pause for a year in my pursuit of collegiate education, and to endeavor to absorb at first hand a little practical knowledge of the every day workings of a law office. The firm then consisted of my father, Elbert O. Hand, and David H. Flett, the latter the subject of our memorials today. Their offices were on the second floor front of the building now occupied by the Fagan Insurance Company, just north of the Court House, and the entrance was an unenclosed outside stairway, flanked by an iron railing. The ascent of this stairway was often not without danger, owing to the accumulation of ice and snow.

I was welcomed most graciously by Mr. Flett and though I must often have tried his patience, our relations were never marred by an angry word or rebuke during the time of our association together. I remember often as the day was drawing to a close and it was time to shake down the coal stove and fill it from the wooden box in the hall, he would pause to relate some incident of the day and to draw a lesson from it for my benefit and edification.

After spending a year in the office I entered Cornell Law School at Ithica, New York, and upon my graduation in 1895, I returned to Racine and was again associated with M^r. Flett in the

firm of Hand & Flett, until 1897, when he left active practice to preside over the newly created Municipal Court; then established in the Secor Building, now known as the Nelson Hotel.

He served but one term, however, on the Bench and in 1901 returned, with a feeling of satisfaction, I have always believed, to the pleasures and rewards of private practice.

In a brief summary of the life and virtues of a man like David H. Flett it is difficult to do him justice. He was not a lawyer merely. He touched life at many points; his influence was widely diffused; he was a well rounded man, so to speak. As I think of what he was and did; of what he meant to our City, County and State and to our profession of the law, basing my reflections on my own personal knowledge of him, I would like to estimate his life and character briefly from three different view-points or angles: first, as a lawyer; secondly, as a citizen and thirdly, as a husband and father.

As a lawyer he had the prime requisite necessary to honorable success in the law; undisputed and uncompromising integrity. No need for him to study the legal canons of ethics; they were part of his fiber and his being. He believed himself truly an officer of the Court sworn to assist in the administration of even and exact justice, and neither Court nor Counsel nor client had ever occasion to challenge the integrity of his spoken word or his professional conduct. Such a man is a splendid example to the younger lawyer in these days of keen competition and commercialized law business. His knowledge of the law was exact and diffuse. He was industrious and kept himself well informed on the current law, both statutory and judicial. In probate matters he particularly excelled, for he was a splendid

business adviser as well as a good lawyer. For many years his probate business was greater than that of any other firm or member of the Bar in his County. He was perhaps primarily, what is known as an office or consulting lawyer. The trial of cases was not to his liking so much as the every-day counsel with clients who believed in and trusted him; he charting their courses in business and private affairs, with a ripe knowledge and experience of rocks and shoals to be avoided. In this way Judge Flett built up a large and profitable practice, much of which endured up to the closing days of his professional career. X His opinion was formed only after adequate consideration and reflection, but when formed and given was always received with respect and confidence; though many times, I remember, the opinion was not what his clients hoped for; and when he once took a position that he felt was supported by good morals and the law, he held to it with Scotch tenacity and vigor, although often to his own pecuniary disadvantage. He was thus true to himself; his profession and his client. He loved his work. He died in harness. In his eightieth year, when most of his contemporaries in practice and his boyhood friends had slipped the bonds of life to meet him afterward in another world, he labored on until stricken in his office at the very post of duty, he was carried to his bed of pain, which he never left till death, mindful of his sufferings, gently bore him to his Eternal Home.

His life work was not confined to the practice of the Law. As Superintendent of Schools for Kenosha County, and as Principal of the High School at Elkhorn, Wisconsin, for a period of four years in his earlier life, he was recognized as an able and conscien-

tious educator of our youth. In after years he recognized his duty to his community and his State by accepting many positions of public trust. As a member of the School Board of the City of Racine; a trustee of the Racine County Insane Asylum and of the Taylor Orphan Asylum and in other ways he discharged what he felt to be his duty to give of his time, without compensation, to civic affairs and to the public at large. He was a constant supporter of the First Presbyterian Church, which he attended, and gave freely and liberally to charity and benevolence and civic improvement, often without solicitation. No deserving cause, needful of help, knocked at his door without generous and prompt response. He was parsimonious with himself; his wants and his tastes were simple; with his family and with public benevolence and charity he was generosity personified. He was the true type of an American citizen; a type to be exemplified and emulated.

Such men are invaluable to a city and community. They are an asset, a good-will not to be reckoned on the ledger in dollars and cents; and though they leave us in body the example of their lives and deeds will live on to the betterment of those now living and ages yet unborn.

As a husband and father, perhaps, the life of Judge Flett reached its greatest fruition. He loved his wife. He loved his family and was loved by all of them in turn. I can think of no higher praise for any man than this. After all, is there much more in life, aside from the hopes and consolation of religion, than the mutual love, devotion and sacrifice of a united family? Judge Flett had that and in full measure. That made of his life a success greater than riches, greater than political fame or achievement.

Robert Louis Stevenson in his beautiful Christmas Sermon

says:

"To be honest, to be kind--to earn a little and to spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends but these without capitulation--above all on the same grim condition to keep friends with himself--here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy."

Judge Flett was all of that and more. His home was a place of joy. To his children the memory of his fatherhood will be a blessing growing richer and more beautiful as the years endure.

We mourn today our dear friend and fellow laborer at the Bar. We have already missed him and we shall miss him more as time goes on. May his life and his example help us to shape our own lives so that when we pass over the hill into the sunset land it may be said of us, as we can so truly say of him:- He was an honor to his profession, a true citizen of his country; a loved and devoted husband and father! He died full of years, his life's work accomplished. His going may be fittingly described in the matchless words of Henley, the poet:

"So be my passing.
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death."

MSS 6. Eugene W. Leach Papers, Box 1

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To the Honorable Judges of Racine County.

We are here to honor a friend, who, a few short days ago, was busily engaged with us in the work of our profession. In setting forth our impressions of him, we can undertake the task only from a personal point of view. We measure excellency in others by some excellency in ourselves. The character of a man is the standard by which he judges the character of another. There is no other way of judging.

We beg leave to place with the court a recorded memory of our impressions concerning our departed friend and co-worker, the lawyer and jurist, Elmer E. Gittins.

Elmer E. Gittins was born on a farm in the Town of Caledonia, Racine County, Wisconsin, on August 31st, 1869. He was the son of Ellis and Jane Gittins, pioneer residents of Racine County. After attending the rural schools in the vicinity of his home, he entered the Racine High School, from which he was graduated in 1889. For two years he taught in the public schools of Racine County to help defray expenses of his subsequent university education. In 1891 he entered the University of Wisconsin, and in 1895 he completed his academic studies. He entered the University of Wisconsin Law School the following term, and graduated from that institution in 1897.

Immediately upon his graduation from the law school, he began the practice of his profession in the City of Racine. In 1898 he became associated with E. R. Burgess, under the firm name of Gittins and Burgess. This partnership continued until 1919, when E. R. Burgess was appointed Judge of our Municipal Court.

During his professional life, Elmer E. Gittins was District Attorney of Racine County for six years, and he was City Attorney of the City of Racine for over four years.

In 1925 he was elected Judge of our County Court. In January 1926, he began his work as County Judge. This position he occupied to the great satisfaction of all, until his lamented death, September 16th, 1929.

For over thirty years, Judge Gittins was recognized as one of the leading lawyers of the City of Racine. As District Attorney, he was a just and vigorous prosecutor. As City Attorney, he was an able advocate and a good counsellor. His was a legal mind---clear, analytical and judicial. His mental grasp was superior, his power of concentration unusual. He was quick to see through the legal problem presented.

As Judge of our County Court, he brought to that tribunal, those rare qualities, kindness and sympathy, so greatly needed in that position. He appreciated the importance of the trust to which he had been elected by the votes of the people. The fine qualities of his mind and heart shone forth in his judicial work more clearly than ever before in his professional life. He was respected and beloved by all the members of the bar.

As a citizen of Racine County, Judge Gittins stood among the front ranks. He extended his support, both moral and financial, to every meritorious activity in our community.

In character, Judge Gittins was irreproachable, strictly honest, of a gentle and kindly nature, always considerate of the rights of others, and never failing in loyalty and devotion to a friend. He was not greedy nor avaricious, nor did he permit himself to take advantage of a client, even when the opportunity was presented.

In addition to his kindly and lovable qualities, was a good sense of right and wrong. He was capable of indignation at carelessness and inattention to duty, at unfairness and injustice. He was firm in his decisions, frank and

and open in his opinions. More than that, he was human and natural.

Too short a time was allotted him in his judgeship. The members of the bar had expected Judge Gittins to occupy his judicial position for many years. His sudden death was truly a great loss and a great sorrow to all those who came in contact with him in the exercise of his duties. Had he lived for the usual time given to man, we are sure that the years would only have added to our respect and love for him. In assembling in this court room in remembrance of our departed co-worker and friend, we honor not only him, but also ourselves and our profession.

In the words of Orville Dewey, we quote:

"The world is filled with the voices of the dead. They speak to us in a thousand remembrances, in a thousand incidents, events and associations. They speak to us not only from their silent graves, but from the throng of life. Though they are invisible, yet life is filled with their presence. They are with us by the silent fireside and in the secluded chamber; they are with us in the paths of society and in the crowded assemblies of men. They speak to us from the lonely wayside and they speak to us from the venerable walls that echo to the steps of a multitude and to the voice of prayer. Go where we will, the dead are with us. We live, we converse with those who once lived and conversed with us. Their well remembered tone mingles with the whispering breezes, the sound of the falling leaf, with the jubilee shout of the springtime. The earth is filled with their shadowy train."

The influence of Judge Gittins will remain with us. His spirit will continue to be felt in the years to come.

As representing the Racine County Bar, we respectfully request that this memorial be filed in the archives

of the Circuit Court of this County.

Dated January 13th, 1930.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard G. Harvey
J. W. Myers
John H. Leight
Committee.

It was my privilege to be associated with Judge Gittins in the practice of law for many years. They were full years and happy years. I learned to know and to realize, more fully perhaps than any one else, the fine and superior qualities of his mind, his keen sense of justice and broad sympathies.

For a period of six years he was district attorney, and we young lawyers not only had to be sure of our law, but in a great many instances had to go out and look up witnesses. The City at that time did not have the detective force it now enjoys.

In all of our associations no unkind word was ever spoken; no unpleasantness ever existed; I learned to love him. His patience with those who did not understand was inexhaustible, and his sympathy for and desire to assist those in trouble and distress as boundless as the sea. Many times have I seen his eyes fill with tears when listening to the sorrowful experiences of some poor client, and then without a retainer or any thought of recompense, start action to remedy the wrong. He never refused to serve a client, no matter how poor he might be, if he had a righteous cause.

His friendliness and spirit of good fellowship attracted men to him. His honesty and integrity, and his marked intellectual abilities begot the confidence of the people and they relied on him to conduct the affairs in three public positions of great responsibility.

He loved people. His greatest enjoyment, I believe, was in associating with his fellowmen.

He was keenly interested in and alive to every move-

ment which he thought would benefit mankind. No appeal in behalf of a worthy cause was ever made to him in vain. Worthy projects he supported whole heartedly, morally and financially-- not ostentatiously, for he hated, with a whole-souled hatred, sham, hypocrisy and deceit. Many kind deeds have I heard concerning him long after they had been performed. He would not tell of them as he took such things as a matter of course, and thought nothing of them.

His right hand never knew what his left hand was doing.

Knowing and loving people as he did, gave him a breadth of knowledge and understanding in dealing with human relationships such as few men have.

Born in the country, he loved the great outdoors, and the people for whom it was created. He recognized the voice of God in every whispering breeze and rippling brook. To him the heavens declared the Glory of God.

He left this life as he had hoped he would, in the midst of his work, when his fine intellectual powers were unimpaired. The world is far richer in sympathetic understanding and in kindness because he lived. His influence, his spirit, his love for all that was beautiful and good and true will go on and on until time shall be no more.

He lived a life of Honor. That Honor which is "the finest sense of justice which the human mind can frame, Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim And guard the way of life from all offence Suffered or done."

Memorial

Elmer C. Hillis

Remarks of
Judge Bergman

U. S. C. A.

JAN 13 1930

J. C. Bergman

Chief of Circuit Court

SIMMONS, WALKER & WRATTEN
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

JOHN B. SIMMONS
MORTIMER E. WALKER
CHARLES F. WRATTEN
HAROLD J. SPORER

JANES BLOCK
RACINE, WISCONSIN

January
Eleventh
1930.

To the Circuit, Municipal and Racine County Courts,
Racine,
Wisconsin.

It is with a great deal of regret that I find that I am unable to attend the Memorial Services to be held for the Hon. Elmer E. Gittins and Otto E. Ahrens at 2 o'clock on January 13th.

My acquaintance with both of these members of the Bar extended over quite a long period of years and impels me to add my personal tribute.

Otto E. Ahrens lived a typical American life. He had ambition and his desire to improve his condition was in good measure realized. He began as a worker in factories, then he became a public officer holding an important public office and later established himself in the practice of law. In each walk of life he earned and kept the friendship and confidence of a great number of his fellow citizens.

Elmer E. Gittins held several public offices of responsibility and in all of them was not only faithful to the trust but performed the duties imposed upon him with marked ability. He was always a good lawyer, a good citizen and a loyal friend. He performed the duties of County Judge in a manner which entitled him to the greatest credit and the high esteem accorded him by both lawyers and all others who had business in the County Court during his term of office. The loss of a most valuable public servant which is caused by his death is augmented by the personal loss to a wide circle of friends of his whole-hearted and kindly friendship.

Respectfully submitted,

MEW:
FAM.



May it please the Court:

The members of the committee appointed by the Racine County Bar Association to prepare and present a memorial on the life of the late Otto E. Ahrens respectfully submits the following:

MEMORIAL OF THE RACINE COUNTY BAR
ASSOCIATION

Otto E. Ahrens was born in Pomerania, Germany, on the 14th day of May, A. D. 1855. While yet a boy his parents moved to Elgin, Illinois, where he received both his elementary and high school education. He finished high school in 1871 and then commenced to learn the business of a carriage maker, the same line of work then pursued by his father. Except for a short period when he was manager of the Belle City Electric Light Company, he was continuously engaged in the work of a carriage maker from 1871 down to 1892. He learned his trade as a carriage maker in Elgin and came to Racine in August, 1879. He first secured employment in Racine at the Fish Brothers Wagon Company and continued employment there until 1883 when he commenced work for the Mitchell-Lewis Company. He worked steadily for this Company until the organization of the Belle City Electric Light Company of which he was manager until 1889. In that year he entered the employment of the Racine Wagon & Carriage Company and continued there until 1892 when he was elected Clerk of the Circuit Court of Racine County. He assumed the duties of Clerk of Circuit Court at the commencement of the year 1893. He was thereafter re-elected for three additional terms of two years, and in all served as Clerk for a period of eight years. He served as Clerk with fidelity and faithfulness to public duty.

During the time he was Clerk of Circuit Court his contact with the administration of the law greatly interested him. He formed the plan of studying law himself and eventually becoming admitted to the Bar. He closely watched and studied the cases tried in the Circuit Court and in his spare moments and at night read cases and text books to help qualify him for admission to the Bar. He completed his legal education at the Northern Indiana School of Law at Valparaiso, Indiana, from which he graduated in June, 1903. The same year he took the Bar examination in the State of Wisconsin and was admitted to the Bar with the highest standing of the sixty-seven applicants who then took the examination.

He opened an office for the practice of law in the City of Racine. Shortly thereafter he became interested in mining interests in Mexico and was gone for a period of about two years. He then returned to the city and remained in the continued and active practice of law up till a few weeks before his death. Although admitted to the Bar late in life his legal activities covered nearly a quarter of a century. He did not have a large law practice, but he was loyal and faithful always to his clients' interests. He was a man of strong likes and dislikes. He was at heart kind, but outwardly he was often hasty and sometimes harsh in expression. He was easily angered and contests in Court were often acrimonious. Frequently opposing counsel were probably more to blame than he. The fact is he usually acted toward others as they in turn acted toward him. If he was approached with courtesy and consideration, he replied in kind; but if a defiant and unnecessarily assertive attitude was taken in dealing with him, he became equally defiant

and assertive. As he often stated "I can be led, but nobody can drive me".

Both before and after he was admitted to the Bar he did a great deal of public singing. He had a fine tenor voice. Without doubt if he had devoted all of his time and energy to the training of his voice he could have been one of the leading tenors of this country. For fifteen years he had charge of the choirs of the First Congregational Church and the First Baptist Church of this city. He sang at many public gatherings. He often sang in political campaigns and it has been said that he sang his way into the hearts of the voters of Racine County. He took part in numerous contests and came away with distinguished honors in competition with singers from all parts of the United States. When he was at his best, it was said that he had an almost perfect tenor voice. Hundreds of people in this county still recall with pleasure the beauty and the melody of his singing.

He was greatly interested in fraternal work over a long period of time. He was an active member of many and at the time of his death held honorable membership in the Masons, the Knights of Pythias, the Loyal Order of Moose, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Sons of Veterans and the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

He was a member of the State Bar Association of Wisconsin and also the Racine County Bar Association. He enjoyed the meetings of the Racine County Bar Association and frequently attended and took part in its monthly activities.

He died on the 30th day of March, A. D. 1928. He was survived by his widow, Mary Ahrens, two brothers, William Ahrens and Ernst Ahrens, and one sister, Caroline Pauline Smith.

It will be noted that Mr. Ahrens was 48 years of age when admitted to the Bar. Within a short time thereafter, he left the practice and was absent in a foreign country for a period of two years. Lawyers, now living, who were members of this Bar 25 years ago, will remember that when he returned, his practice was gone and his properties more or less dissipated and that he was confronted with extraordinary difficulties in re-establishing himself. No one will claim that he achieved notable success in his profession but it must be said in justice to his memory, that there is much in his career that exemplifies strength of character, industry and persistence, far above the average.

Mr. Ahrens had many acquaintances and many people were proud to call him their friend.

Dated this 13th day of January, A. D. 1930.

Respectfully submitted,

Wm A. Benson
W. R. Janney
Walter Thompson
Committee Racine County Bar
Association.

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ASST. DIST. ATTY.

MEMORIAL

Because of my close association with Christopher C. Gittings in recent years I was delegated by the committee of the Racine County Bar Association, consisting of William D. Thompson, Elbert B. Hand and myself, to draft this memorial.

In speaking of Mr. Gittings I speak of one to whom I was bound by the closest ties of affection and gratitude for a period of over sixteen years, and I knew him altogether for almost twenty-five years. My acquaintance began when I commenced the study of law during summer vacations in the office of the firm of Palmer and Gittings, of which he was a member.

Christopher C. Gittings was born October 29, 1862 in the Town of Caledonia, Racine County, the son of William and Elizabeth G. Gittings. The family was of Welsh ancestry. They were among Racine County's pioneers, settling on a farm in the Town of Caledonia in the year 1850. It was on this farm that Mr. Gittings was born and brought up in his early years, the same as all poor farmer boys were brought up in those days. He attended the country school and later the old Mc Mynn Academy in Racine, where he studied under that remarkable, well-known educator, John G. Mc Mynn. He graduated from the Academy in 1881. During the period following, and until his admission to the bar, he followed various pursuits, including mostly the teaching of a country school and studying law. In 1883 he took up a homestead in Faulk County, South Dakota, then a territory. He spent

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several summers there pioneering and complying with the requirements to establish his homestead rights. Winters he came back to Racine County and taught school. I am informed by friends and pupils who survive him that he taught in a school at or near the village of Franksville, and also in the Richards School on the Green Bay Road, southwest of Racine. I had known for some time that he had also spent some time at Racine College, and in looking over some old papers in the vault in our office I discovered two old receipts for tuition paid in the law department at Racine College, from which receipts it appears that he attended that school during the year 1888.

He studied law also in the office of Henry T. Fuller, one of Racine's most able and prominent attorneys of the early days. He was admitted to practice in December 1889, and shortly thereafter he became a member of the firm of Fuller, Fyfe and Gittings. The senior member of the firm was Percival S. Fuller, a son of Henry T. Fuller, who died in July 1889, or shortly before Mr. Gittings was admitted to practice. Mr. Fyfe never really practiced in Racine. He was a Chicago lawyer, and, as I am informed, a close college friend of Percival Fuller. This partnership continued for only one year, as in January 1891 the firm of Palmer and Gittings was organized, consisting of Judge Walter C. Palmer and Mr. Gittings.

It is very interesting to know the contact and connection Mr. Gittings, one of our own bar, had with the oldest, most capable and prominent lawyers and judges that ever practiced

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in this County and State. The first lawyer that ever practiced in Racine was Marshal M. Strong, and he came here in 1856. Henry T. Fuller was admitted to practice in the State of New York in 1847 and immediately went to Milwaukee, where he was admitted in the same year. He apparently stayed there for about three years, for in 1850 he was admitted to practice in our Circuit Court, and also in that year became a partner of Marshal M. Strong, the firm going under the name of Strong and Fuller. You may also be interested to know that these dates are certainly authentic, for only during the last few months I have found among papers in our office the original certificates of admission to practice of Mr. Fuller, including some sort of Latin certificate or diploma given by Racine College to Henry T. Fuller in the year 1855, which is signed by Marshal M. Strong as an official of that institution. The firm of Strong and Fuller continued for a period of Fourteen years and until 1864, when it was changed to Fuller and Dyer, the new member being Charles E. Dyer, who later became Judge of the United States District Court at Milwaukee, and still later general counsel for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company. He was one of the most capable and prominent lawyers in the State. The partnership of Fuller and Dyer continued until the year 1875. During that period our much-beloved John B. Winslow read law in their office and became a member of the firm in 1875, when it was known as Fuller and Winslow. Judge Winslow, however I believe, was very soon thereafter elected Circuit Judge, and did not practice as a member of the firm for more than

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one or two years, for in 1877 the firm became known as Fuller and Fuller, the son of Henry T. Fuller having been admitted to practice and taken into the firm. It was while the firm was Fuller and Fuller that Mr. Gittings studied in their office, and as I have already stated Mr. Fuller, Sr., died in July 1889, and a short time thereafter in the early part of 1890 Mr. Gittings became a partner.

There are a great many more things that could be told about the history of this old firm with which Mr. Gittings studied, but our time is too short, and they probably would not have a proper place in this sketch. I have gone into this history briefly for the reason that I wanted to bring out the contacts, influences and preparation that an active member of our own bar had in those years, which seem far behind and yet were brought so near to us through our association with Mr. Gittings. Besides various documents such as I have mentioned, there are other relics that have come down through the years. For example, we still have in our office a very old picture of the Racine harbor, which was inherited from the old firm of which Henry T. Fuller was a member.

The partnership of Palmer and Gittings continued for a period of twenty-three years and until January, 1914, when Walter C. Palmer entered upon his duties as County Judge, having been elected the previous year. It was then that it became my privilege and my good fortune to become associated as a partner with Mr. Gittings, which association continued until the time of his death on April 19, 1930. During that period we never had a

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written agreement and needed none. There was never any dispute over partnership affairs. Mr. Gittings continued active in the practice and giving full time to law work for a period of only five years, or until January 1919. During the war his brother, William G. Gittings, one of the active executives in the Gold Medal Camp Furniture Company, had died, and Mr. Gittings, being heavily interested as a stockholder, was called upon at least to some extent take the place of his older brother, and from that time on he gradually gave more and more time to that business. He, however, continued to practice law down to the time of his last illness and never gave up his law office downtown. Even during his last illness on one or two occasions he remarked if there was no objection he would always like to continue to feel that he had a desk in the down town office available for him at any time that he might desire to use it, and he did frequently, as long as he was able, make appointments at his old law office. He always felt that the law was his field and his profession, and he disliked very much to breakaway from it. He loved his law work more than anything except his family, home and friends, one reason for this probably being that it gave him wonderful opportunities to do good to others. As a lawyer he was very capable, and in his active days he always had a very large practice. Only a few years after he was admitted to the bar, due to his industry and ability he was chosen City Attorney, which position he held for a period of five years. He was for the most part a business or office lawyer, acting in an advisory capacity, but he also tried many

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cases in his early days, and was counsel in some very important litigation. For instance, he was one of the attorneys for the J. I. Case Plow Works in an action against the J. I. Case Threshing Machine Company, involving the use of the Case name. He was also interested in considerable patent litigation, representing various manufacturing institutions of Racine, and in that work was associated with some of the most prominent attorneys in the country. I remember during my time of his being associated with Charles Linthicum, an outstanding patent attorney of Chicago, who was considered the leading patent attorney in the country. Some obtained the impression during his later years that he was dilatory in his work. However, the trouble was that he undertook too much, was too kind and could not turn away people when he was busy. Rich and poor alike were given all the time they might require, and oftentimes more, because he was too kindly and courteous to dismiss them. He would spend time with the poor, even though there might be no compensation forthcoming, while wealthy manufacturers waited for him with paying business. When he was not interrupted he had a remarkable capacity and acumen for finding readily what he wanted. He could accomplish more in a day when left alone and able to concentrate than any man I have ever come in contact with, and at such times he was most thorough in his work. He believed in avoiding litigation and getting together to settle differences, provided it could be done on a basis fair and just to his client.

He was a man of business with a great fund of practical common sense combined with business judgment. He was

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acting counsel for many individual business men of his community, and also for numerous of its manufacturing and mercantile institutions. In some of them he became financially interested and others he helped promote by loaning them money. At the time of his death he was active as president of the Gold Medal Folding Furniture Company, secretary of the Mohr-Jones Hardware Company, and secretary of the Progressive Dairy Company. The latter company was organized by him for the purpose of helping the farmers of Racine County dispose of their dairy products to advantage. He himself had a large dairy farm a short distance from the city, which was for him a pleasure and a hobby as well as a business. There was something sentimental about this farm too, because a portion of it was a part of his father's old homestead where he was born.

Next to his profession of the law and business, he was very keenly interested in politics. He was a Republican and active in the party's circles in all the years I knew him. However, he himself never held a salaried^{political}/office except that of Post Master for a period of four years from 1908 to 1912, to which position he was appointed by President Roosevelt, and continued under the administration of President Taft. He held various offices with Racine city and county political organizations, and for years was a member of the State Central Republican Committee. At one time he was treasurer and also chairman of that committee. At the time of the break between the Stalwarts and Progressives, Mr. Gittings was ~~the~~ leader of the Progressive group, and our present Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Marvin B. Rosenberry, was ~~the~~ leader

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of the Stalwart group, which broke away from the regular Republican convention at Madison, and organized what was called at that time the rump convention. He was personally acquainted with President Roosevelt, and on several occasions was in conference with the President at the White House on matters of public interest. He was a close personal friend of the late Senator Robert M. La Follette, and one of the latter's warmest supporters to the end. He was so close to the Senator that the latter never came to Racine but what he visited and stayed at the home of Mr. Gittings. He was well known all over the State, and through politics made many warm and life-long friends, and much to his credit even those that did not agree with him politically were very often warm friends instead of enemies. He was interested in politics from the time that he was able to vote, for I am informed that when he was homesteading in Faulk County, Territory of South Dakota, previous to his admission to the bar and while still only a young man, he was honored as a delegate to one of the first Republican conventions in that section. Such keen interest in politics continued down to the time of his death.

For many years he was a most useful and public-spirited citizen, never idle, and until the very last few years of his life not even taking vacations from his labors, except possibly to attend conventions. In spite of all his private interests, he was almost always working on some matter of a public nature. He found great pleasure in doing good to others.

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He was always helping the poor and needy, the boys and girls, not only of the city but of the State, and also the old folks. For years he was a member of various boards of educational, charitable, and social institutions, always finding time for such work, no matter how busy he might have been on his private affairs. He served on the board of directors of such organizations as the Central Association, the Boy Scouts, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Palmeto Old Ladies Home. For years he was one of the trustees of the Racine County Agricultural School. For years he was in charge of the annual sale of stamps of the Anti-tuberculosis Association. He was president at different times of both the state and local Young Men's Christian Association. He was always one of the leaders in campaigns for funds whenever such were being carried on for the benefit of the institutions in which he was interested. During the war he was active on the Liberty Loan drives. It would seem that he was, always spending a portion of his time on projects of a public nature, or such as promoted the welfare of his fellows. I am quite sure that no one can think of any citizen of our city that did more for others than Mr. Gittings, and very often he did it at a sacrifice. He not only gave of his time, but even more of his money. In fact, he was generous to a fault.

Mr. Gittings was intensely religious, but not a fanatic. He was very liberal in his attitude toward others, no matter how much they might have disagreed with him. He was a member of the Plymouth Congregational Church from the time of its organization, and of the church that preceded that for years.

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At various times he was treasurer and deacon of that church. He was the leader and principal force behind the movement to build the beautiful building which now stands on College Avenue and Twelfth Street in this city, and which I believe is a monument to his endeavors.

He was married in 1901 to Laura A. Jones, daughter of another old pioneer, John W. Jones, a captain on the Great Lakes. This union proved a most happy and lasting one. Never were two human beings so faithful to each other. For some years previous to Mr. Gittings' last illness, his dear wife had been quite seriously ill, but when he began to fail she seemed to gain strength, and veritably nursed him during his last illness, undoubtedly being instrumental in prolonging his days. We friends miss him much, but she misses him beyond measure of comparison. The least we can do is to extend our heartfelt sympathy.

They were not blessed with children, but having none the attention they would naturally receive went to others.

It is an honor to be known as a great man. It is more of an honor to have the reputation of being a good man. The first comes through exceptional intelligence and the ability to attract attention, which traits, however, may antagonize even more than attract. Goodness comes from the heart that can only create love and affection. Chris Gittings was clearly the latter, and as such we shall remember him. Likewise, we shall remember him not only as a brother lawyer, but more as the ideal friend.

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It is sometimes said that any man with any force of character must have enemies. If Mr. Gittings had any, I never heard or knew of it. It often happened that those on the opposite side of a case later came to him with other cases. Although he openly and actively opposed the saloon in its day, he nevertheless had saloon keepers sometimes come to him with their business because they had such confidence in him. Many a person has told me: "You can depend on Chris being honest with you," and, "If there is an honest lawyer, Chris Gittings is one." I have known of no one who was so generally well spoken of, who commanded such public respect and personal regard, and who won and held the love of all who came in contact with him. He had a sterling character and exemplary habits. He was modest, simple, and unassuming. He was always calm, never excited or angry. He might argue a difference of opinion in a business-like way, but I never knew of him to change such an argument into a quarrel. He was most remarkable in keeping himself under complete control. To those fortunate enough to be his friends there remains the memory of a loyal, tender friendship, as rare as it was beautiful.

Adolph R. Janecky for the
Committee consisting of:
William D. Thompson
Elbert B. Hand
Adolph R. Janecky

Memorial

Christopher E. Siltenski

By

Joseph P. Janakay

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John F. O'Connell


CHRISTOPHER C. GITTINGS.

Chris Gittings was our friend. He was a friend to all mankind. He lived in full measure a useful, helpful, four-square life. One might say more words of such a man, a real personal friend, but I know of no higher tribute than I have expressed. Everywhere he served, and that was literally everywhere, he served generously -- too generously -- so generously that he overtaxed his own personal vitality and resources. Everywhere he touched life with his own upstanding, outstanding Christian life, he encouraged, inspired, led and helped. His home life was choice.

I knew him as a student of the law and as a lawyer whose counsel was sound and from whom no written stipulation was needed or exacted. His going to his certain and merited reward was and long will be felt a loss to this community and to our state, in both of which his counsel and his leadership was honest and valued. His life was a high example.

If it be true that "there is nothing in life except what we put there," his life was rich indeed, and if the good one does lives after him, the influence of this life is enduring. The deeper men go into life, the deeper is their conviction that this life is not all. It is an "unfinished symphony." A day may round out an insect's life and a bird or a beast needs no tomorrow. Not so with him who knows that he is related to God and has felt "the power of an endless life." Moody said: "The great question of life is, Is my name written in heaven?" The answer in this case is certain.

"Life! we've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather:
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear:
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time.
Say not good night -- but in some brighter clime
Bid me good morning."



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James F. O'Brien

