

CHIEF JUSTICE GROVER L. BROADFOOT TRI-COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION MEMORIAL

Grover L. Broadfoot was born on December 27, 1892, at Independence, Wisconsin. When he was one year old his family moved to Mondovi, which continued to be his home until his death, which occurred on May 18, 1962. He attended the public schools at Mondovi, and entered the University of Wisconsin, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1918. He enlisted in the army after his graduation. After his discharge from service he returned to Mondovi and began the practice of the law with Schuyler Gilman under the firm name of Gilman & Broadfoot. Later the firm was known as Broadfoot, Larkin, Brown & Ward, and maintained offices at Mondovi, Osseo, and Eau Claire. The firm was known as Broadfoot & Larkin when he was appointed to the supreme court in 1948.

He was married to Margaret Jacobi in 1925. Mrs. Broadfoot died on October 6, 1961. He was survived by one son, John, of Spooner, six grandchildren, one brother, Roscoe, of Oak Lawn, Illinois, three sisters, Mrs. Frederick (Grace) Wells, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Mrs. Henry (Frances) McMarten, Pompano Beach, Florida, and Mrs. W. Everett (Doris) Brobst, Wausau, Wisconsin.

He was a member of the Congregational Church, the Johnson-Dillon Post of the American Legion, the Knights of Pythias, and Lodge 252, Free and Accepted Masons, all of Mondovi, the Scottish Rite Bodies of Eau Claire, the Zor Shrine of Madison, Kappa Sigma Fraternity, the Madison Club, the Tri-County Bar Association, the State Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

His record of public service is varied, long, and state-wide: District Attorney of Buffalo County, 1923-1935, Mayor of Mondovi, 1943-1947, state board of tax appeals, 1939-1943, Wisconsin state assembly, 1945-1948, attorney general, June 5 to November 12, 1948, and supreme court justice from 1948 to the date of his death. He also served as a director and as president of the Mondovi State Bank for many years.

The story of Justice Broadfoot is that of a country lawyer who gained high office and great honor but who never really grew away from his country background. His long experience as a public prosecutor and trial lawyer in his home area in Western Wisconsin served him well in the many and varied offices which he held. He and his memory will always be a part of the small Wisconsin city which to him was always home. His knowledge of the problems and cares of country folk, gained from first-hand contact with them, gave to all the things he did so well the common sense touch. His talks and writings were devoid of frills, easily understood, and flavored with his special brand of wit and dry humor.

We who are presenting this memorial lived with him and saw him grow in stature politically and professionally. To us he was always the small-town boy who had moved on to wider and broader fields, but who had never lost the down-to-earth approach that life in

the rural areas had given. He was the sort of man whom it was a pleasure to be with, and an hour spent visiting with him was a great adventure. Satire or ridicule never marred such visits, or left scars upon persons or memories. His was always the kindly attitude, praise rather than censure, tolerance rather than criticism. An eminent churchman once defined a gentleman as one who never unnecessarily causes pain to another. Within this definition he was truly a great gentleman.

His frequent returns to Mondovi were to him a constant pleasure, and his many friends there looked forward to them and the chance of seeing him and visiting with him. Bank director meetings, local bar association get-togethers, and the summer vacations at Mondovi were the highlights of the year to him. The recognition dinner given in his honor at Mondovi on his elevation to the position of chief justice, the presentation of a gavel to him by the local bar association, were tributes to a true and outstanding friend. It was Napoleon who said, "Men are nothing, but a man is everything." To those who knew him well, Justice Broadfoot, or rather Grover, was that "everything." A kindly spirit, a gentle manner, friendly, courteous, unassuming, yet always sharp, keen, witty, and analytical. His were the attributes that endear one to his fellowman.

As an after-dinner speaker or as a toastmaster he had no peer. His sparkling sense of humor and his dry wit gave to his stories a special flavor. He was much sought after for these occasions, and never was an audience bored or disappointed. Surely, here was the real mark of genius.

Until his health failed him, life was ever a thrilling and satisfying experience. Friendship was all around him, and he enjoyed it to the utmost. While in frail health for many years, he always managed to remain active, and mercifully his last illness was of relatively short duration.

In his untimely passing, we feel that this court has lost a great chief justice, that the members of this court have lost an able and beloved associate, that the state of Wisconsin has lost a great public servant and outstanding jurist, that Western Wisconsin has lost its most-distinguished citizen, and that Mondovi has lost the man whom all called "friend."

We need not dwell at length upon his legal ability, his learning, and his common sense. The record of these is written in the permanent records of the courts in which he practiced, the legislature in which he served, the opinions of the attorney general, the records of the board of tax appeals, and the decisions of this great and illustrious court. Those records and opinions speak for themselves.

While we have dwelt upon the man himself and the traits which to us speak louder than the printed word, let us add here a few things that were said of him by others.

LaVern G. Kostner, Arcadia attorney, in his remarks in this court at the inaugural of Justice Broadfoot as chief justice, said, ". . . when an individual stands the test of close association for many years, and during those years gains the utmost respect of his closest associates and fellow practitioners, then truly he has met the test."

A poem in the printed program of the recognition dinner at Mondovi in February concludes as follows,

"He has an unassuming mien and takes

"A thought of home, though he may be afar,

"To keep old friendships ever in his heart."

The Milwaukee Journal, in the final paragraph of a beautiful editorial published at the time of his death, said,

"Finally, his genuine humility was the kind, not that underrates one's self, but that is not puffed up and sees good in others wherever it may be found. The Wisconsin community is richer for the likes of Grover Broadfoot. Such men are rare."

We file this inadequate printed sketch of his life, of a record unsurpassed, one of hard work, of great accomplishment, of high office gained, of myriad friends, and of friendship generously given and bountifully received -- the story of a man whom we were pleased to know, one who left with us the record of a great and distinguished career, but greater still the record of a true and trusted friend.

Respectfully submitted,
Clarence E. Fugina, Arcadia, Chairman,
G. L. Pattison, Alma
Ralph S. Lund, Black River Falls,

Committee, Tri-County Bar Association

MEMORIAL TO THE HONORABLE GROVER L. BROADFOOT, DECEASED,
THE LATE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN.

The Committee representing the Tri-County Bar Association presents to the Circuit Court of Buffalo County, Wisconsin this Memorial in honor of the late Chief Justice Grover L. Broadfoot, and moves that it be filed as a part of the record of this Court.

Grover L. Broadfoot was born in Independence, in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, on December 27, 1892, and passed away at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Friday, May 18, 1962, at the age of 69 years. His death was caused by a heart ailment.

His family moved to Mondovi when he was one year old. His father died when he was only 11 years old, and after finishing high school he worked in a store to earn enough money to attend a business college for six months. He then went to work in Omaha, Nebraska as a stenographer, but looked forward to the day when he would be able to prepare to be a lawyer. His employer in Omaha encouraged him in his long-range plan and in 1912 he enrolled in the University of Wisconsin, and in 1918 he was granted and received his law degree there, following which he promptly enlisted in the army in World War I.

Upon his discharge from service, he returned to Mondovi and entered law practice with Schuyler Gilman under the name of Gilman and Broadfoot. He later practiced law alone for a number of years before becoming associated with Attorney Edwin Larkin, with whom he practiced as a partner until he left active practice to accept a State appointment.

On December 29, 1925, he married Margaret Jacobi, who

served him devotedly until her death in October, 1961. He is survived by his son, John Broadfoot, of Spooner, Wisconsin; a brother, Roscoe, of Oak Lawn, Illinois; three sisters, Mrs. Frederick Wells, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Mrs. Harry McMartin, of Pompano Beach, Florida, and Mrs. W. Everett Brobat, of Wausau, Wisconsin, and six grandchildren.

Mr. Broadfoot held many offices of public trust and served his community in many capacities during his many years of law practice in Mondovi. He served as City Attorney for many years, and also as Mayor from 1943 to 1947. He entered politics in 1923 when he was elected District Attorney of Buffalo County and held that office until 1935. At the suggestion of the Honorable Elmer Barlow, who was an old friend of his, the Governor appointed him to the State Board of Tax Appeals and later he became the head of such Board. In 1947 he was elected to the State Assembly to represent this district. In 1948 Governor Oscar Rennebohm appointed him Attorney General of the State, and then, five months later, when Supreme Court Justice Elmer Barlow died, Governor Rennebohm appointed him to serve as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin on November 12, 1948. He was re-elected to a full term in 1955. Then last year when Chief Justice John E. Martin retired from the bench to become Court Administrator, Mr. Broadfoot was elevated to the position of Chief Justice by reason of his seniority on the Court. At that time he had been a Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin for 13 years. His inauguration as Chief Justice on January 2, 1962 was attended by many members of the Tri-County Bar Association and by many friends and dignitaries.

He was a member of the Congregational Church and the Buffalo Club, the American Legion, the Masonic Lodge, Shriners, and the Knights of Pythias. He served in the management of the

State Bank of Mondovi as a member of the Board of Directors for many years and was its President when he died. He was a charter member of the Tri-County Bar Association and a member of the State Bar Association of Wisconsin.

"From small town country lawyer to Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin" might well be a fitting caption and tribute to this learned and illustrious man, and such was truly the road he traveled to attain the highest legal position in the State. In his own words of sincerity and simple modesty, spoken in response at the time of his inauguration, he said that it was not by reason of merit or popularity that he gained that post. Yet all who knew him feel and know that he deserved it. In the words of John McGalloway, Past President of the State Bar Association of Wisconsin, forcibly spoken, in paying a special personal tribute to the Chief Justice, "your elevation to the Chief Justiceship was not merely the coincidence of seniority but a logical step in a career which has led you to the eminence you have attained today." We all know that if he had but had the period of service to prove it, he would have shown that he could fulfill and carry out the responsibilities of the office of Chief Justice with the same quiet capability with which he had carried out the duties of Supreme Court Justice for the preceding 13 years.

What made the man we all know as "Grover" the great man he was, and why was he so well liked by all?

He was a profound scholar, having been well schooled in the fundamentals of the law. He was a man of high ideals and sound moral principles, which made his pattern of life, his acts, and his deeds, wholesome, uplifting, and of help to those with whom he worked and counseled. He was a man of simple truths, firm convictions, with an inner sense of fairness and justice, and for these he was

respected by friend and adversary alike. He always listened carefully and patiently, thought cautiously and profoundly, spoke learnedly and sincerely, and acted wisely and soundly. He could not have done any of this if he had not been the particular type of individual he was. He never wanted to hurt anyone or anyone's feelings, yet when the occasion arose he would often give counsel and advice it must have hurt him to give, but which he felt was the best of its kind to be given for the best interests of the one to whom or for whom it was given. He was a very modest man as was evidenced throughout his life by his many acts of kindness and charity for individuals and his community. He was a public-spirited and public-minded individual and in this connection he gave willingly and unstintingly of his time and talents for his home community. He had a genuine sense of civic responsibility and pride, which stands as a superb example for all of us. He once told his son, John, "some of the things in this world you have to do for free. Give yourself to these civic responsibilities as you would the work that you're paid to do."

He was an humble man, never too proud or too busy or too tired to give a cheery word to a friend, to listen to a client with troubles, however trivial or unimportant they might have seemed, or to attend a civic meeting or plan with community officials on a public project. He lived an exemplary life and practiced what he preached. It could be said of him that he trod lightly but that he carried a big stick, meaning that folks respected and admired him and looked up to him for what he was, for what he stood for, and for what he did for people. He was a man of great depth and strong character. He had a tremendous capacity for work and of being able to do it without wasting energy and without upsetting himself in doing it. In his own words, at the time of his inaugura-

tion, he summed up what had been his own way of life, when he said "the lawyer in the small town doesn't specialize. He serves his friends, and he serves in whatever capacity they need him." Grover L. Broadfoot can truly be said to have been a friend to his clients, to his fellow townspeople, and to his associates. It was this friendly nature which made people feel at ease in conferring with him and which commanded great respect from all who had any association with him, either as a practicing attorney or as a member of the Court. Being with him and in his presence, listening to him analyze a legal problem or speak profoundly of the economics of the day, made you feel you were a better person for having been there.

He was a formidable adversary as a practicing attorney but earned the admiration and respect of friend and foe alike in his days as a country lawyer. His decisions as a member of the high Court were founded on dinity and were always rendered in such a way that you were made to feel that he was giving his all in an effort to state the truth simply in relation to the law which applied. He had a keen sense of inner justice, of what was or should be right and wrong, and he carried that fine quality with him all through his practice of the law and in his work on the Supreme Court.

It could be said of him that he spoke only when he had something worthwhile to say, and because of that people listened intently when he spoke. This was because he was a man of mature judgment, with poise and self-assurance gathered over the period of many years through his ease of manner, gracious ways, cheerful disposition, and optimistic outlook on life. All this too made him completely at ease when with friends and clients, when in Court as a practicing attorney, when on the Supreme Court Bench, or when

at a banquet table or social gathering. He was never one to crab, or fuss, or criticize people or things in an unkind way. He would never hesitate to speak his true convictions, which were always based on sound reasoning of such good quality that even his opponents on issues would have to admire him for his stand.

He enjoyed reading and for diversion and relaxation played cards and was an ardent sports spectator.

Perhaps no man has ever endeared himself to his fellowman more completely than did Grover Broadfoot by his wonderful and delightful sense of humor and dry wit, which were always charming because of his superb and delicate choice of words and expressions in telling stories, of his experiences, and in relating everyday incidents.


We honor and pay tribute to him in his capacity as the late Chief Justice Grover L. Broadfoot of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin. We will miss him and remember him as Grover L. Broadfoot, the individual, for the fine and great lawyer, friend, and gentlemen which he was, and for the many ways in which he endeared himself to all of us.

Dated this first day of October, A. D., 1962.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


Marvin L. Fugina


G. L. Pattison


James A. Blum

Committee for the Tri-County Bar
Association.

To the Memory of Grover L. Broadfoot

Response by the Court:

We are met today for the purpose of honoring the memory of a very distinguished member of the Bar of this Circuit. It has long been the custom of the Bar to present memorials to its members, not only for the purpose of honoring the deceased, but also for the purpose of supplying for the records of the court, histories of their lives and achievements.

Today a memorial has been presented to Chief Justice Grover L. Broadfoot, a most distinguished lawyer and an able, conscientious and beloved member of the Supreme Court of this State.

He was a man of patience, kindness, tolerance and understanding to whom the humblest citizen could go, with the knowledge and confidence that his problems would be sympathetically received and his rights ably protected. He was friendly to all and his friendship was of that character which manifested itself in service to others. He was well grounded in the law and this, coupled with a rare gift of knowledge of and ability to understand human nature made him an able and outstanding attorney and a distinguished jurist. Perhaps no greater measure of a man can be found than in the esteem with which he is held in his local community. The splendid and inspiring turnout of the citizens of Mondovi and of this county last spring to honor him in his attaining the office of Chief Justice speaks better than words can tell the love, admiration and respect of his fellow citizens.

And now in a spirit of gratitude for the privilege of having known him and being permitted to associate and work with him:

It Is Ordered that the memorial be received and made a part of the permanent records of this Court.