

ROBERT W. RADCLIFFE

(July 16, 1934 – September 8, 2014)

Robert W. Radcliffe was born on July 16, 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression, to William and Mildred (Larkin) Radcliffe and grew up on a farm in Jackson County, Wisconsin. He graduated from Melrose High School in 1951 and attended La Crosse State University in La Crosse, Wisconsin. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1954, serving as a jet pilot aboard the air craft carrier U.S.S. Hornet, and achieved the rank of Navy lieutenant, J.G.

He was discharged from the Navy in 1958 and returned to Wisconsin, where he enrolled in law school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. It was there that he met the love of his life, Judy Mount. Robert and Judy were united in marriage on July 2, 1960, in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

He earned his law degree in 1962 and returned to Jackson County, where he opened his law practice in Black River Falls. In that same year, he was elected as district attorney for Jackson County, a position he served in for more than a decade. While district attorney, Robert gained the respect of prominent judges in the area, namely, Bruce Beilfuss (who later served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court), Lowell Schoengarth, A.L. Twesme, and Richard F. Lawton, as well as prominent trial lawyers, Huey Haight from Neilsville and LaVerne G. Kostner from Arcadia.

In 1984, Robert was elected as judge for the Jackson County Circuit Court. He served three terms as judge, during which time he was appointed as chief judge of the judicial district by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, heard more than 177,600 cases, and presided over more than two dozen homicide trials. He retired from the bench in 2000. Robert was a regular attendee at Tri-County Bar meetings.

Robert had a wry sense of humor, choosing his words carefully and frugally. He also knew when to listen and when to provide advice. Throughout his years as an attorney and judge, he took pride in mentoring young attorneys and improving the local bar's quality of service. Robert also acted as a role model for family members who themselves would follow his example and become lawyers.

Robert was community- and civic-minded, serving on board of directors both locally and statewide. He also was proud of his work through his banking business, which gave him an opportunity to assist friends and neighbors.

When not working, Robert enjoyed woodworking, and spending time outdoors and on his farm. In particular, he enjoyed hunting pheasants with Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Jon Wilcox, among others.

Robert and Judy had four (4) children, and eight (8) grandchildren.

Presented: January 8, 2016

Contributors: William N. Koslo, Robert Hagness