

[Zoller, Abram]

Abram Zoller Dies; Was State Jurist

Herkimer—Former Supreme Court Justice Abram Zoller, 79, of 426 N. Main St., who was elected to two 14-year terms as a justice in the Fifth Judicial District, died yesterday in his home.

Justice Zoller first assumed duties as a Supreme Court justice in 1934 after serving as county judge and surrogate for three years. He was elected to a second term in 1947.

After his retirement in 1952, upon reaching the mandatory retirement age, he served as an official referee for the Fifth Judicial District until 1958.

He was also elected mayor of Little Falls on the Republican ticket in 1915, and re-elected to a second term in 1917.

Justice Zoller made history so far as New York State courts were concerned, when early during his first term, while presiding at a term in Kingston, [he] made it mandatory that women jurors remove their hats while serving in the jury box. He ruled that "hats were detracting."

He was born in Little Falls, son of Jacob and Mary Jane Dygert Zoller. Justice Zoller's father was founder of the Jacob Zoller Wholesale Food business in Little Falls. The Zoller family first settled in upstate New York during the Colonial days.

Justice Zoller graduated from Little Falls High School, Williams College and Harvard Law School. At Williams he ranked fifth in his class and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

He was admitted to the Bar in 1907 and opened law offices in Syracuse and Little Falls. In addition to serving as mayor of the city he also served as a member and president of the Little Falls Board of Education.

Justice Zoller was credited with inaugurating a system to improve the selection of grand juries in the county by establishing a system of hand-picked panels for criminal actions.

He was also interested in Americanization procedures before naturalization of new citizens was removed from the county.

Justice Zoller was a member of the original Board of Managers of Pine Crest Tuberculosis Sanatorium and took an active interest in the work of the Herkimer County Humane Society. His twin sister, Zaida, has been president of the society many years.

He was a member, past state and [past] national president of Sons of the American Revolution. He was also president of the New York State Association [should be "Convention"] of Universalists; a member of St. Paul's Universalist Church, Little Falls; chairman of the Herkimer County Chapter of the American Red Cross, and a past president of the Herkimer County Historical Society.

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Justice Zoller leaves his wife, the former Muriel Cornelia Schmidt of Ilion; a brother, John I. Zoller of Little Falls; two sisters, Miss Maude Zoller and Miss Zaida Zoller, both of Little Falls.

A private prayer service will be at 1:30 Monday in the family home. A public funeral will be at 2:30 from St. Paul's Universalist Church, Little Falls, with the Rev. Robert W. Sterling, pastor, officiating. Burial will be in Fairview Cemetery, Little Falls.

Calling hours are from 7 to 9 this evening and from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 tomorrow.

Roger A. Fortuna, president of the Herkimer County Bar Association, announced last night that members will meet at 2:15 Monday, in front of St. Paul's Church in Little Falls, to attend the funeral of Justice Zoller.

Daily Press, Utica NY, Fri. 1 Jun 1962

Transcribed on 15 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY