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Lawyers are one of the recognized groups of people to which society looks for leadership. Within this select group of professionals, it is probably an understatement to say that Chief Justice Popovich is a leader among leaders. Indeed, Justice Popovich's willingness to accept new challenges and his open mind to new ways of doing things in setting up the Minnesota Court of Appeals allowed me the opportunity to work with the judge—through the creation in 1984 of a judicial internship program, unprecedented in the Minnesota appellate courts.

Chief Judge Popovich must have liked my work because, for the 1984 to 1985 court term, I served in the capacity Eric Magnuson has referred to as "assistant judge." Now it is 1991, and I have a difficult time believing my clerkship ended nearly six years ago. The year and a half I worked with Chief Judge Popovich was extremely rewarding. I was able to spend an additional year before beginning private practice learning substantive law, becoming familiar with the workings of trial and appellate courts, and most of all, enjoying the tutelage and mentorship of Chief Popovich.

The qualities I came to appreciate in Chief Judge Peter S. Popovich which make him stand out among his professional peers are his uncompromising dedication to any task he undertakes, his strong sense of principle and ethics, and his commitment to public service. I am sure the first of these three qualities—known as "a certain work ethic" to former law clerks—will be mentioned in many of the tributes that accompany this one. Suffice it to say, my observation was that Chief Judge Popovich's hard driving style was equalled only by his commitment to, and love of, family.

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Justice Popovich's adherence to principle in deciding cases is apparent in the opinions he authored. He is an outspoken advocate of the United States Constitution, and especially of the Bill of Rights. Chief Justice Popovich's enduring belief in freedom of the press is apparent in his decisions and in his personal efforts to facilitate media access to the courts.

Likewise, his opinions reflect his belief that the underlying purpose of the law is timely justice. As Chief Judge, and as Chief Justice, Peter Popovich strove to ensure that appellate decisions included reasons for the decision, avoided sterile or blind application of precedent, and were rendered in time to be of meaning to the parties.

The duty of public service and a willingness to accept that responsibility are themes in Justice Popovich's career as judge and as legislator. There are very few individuals willing to give up a successful private practice in law to go into public service. The sacrifices are well-known and significant. Nevertheless, this is exactly what Peter S. Popovich did when asked to head the new Minnesota Court of Appeals in 1983. Under his leadership, the dedicated judges, lawyers, and staff of the appellate court have created and maintained one of the best state court of appeals in the nation.

I had the privilege of observing first hand each of the qualities I have described when I worked with the judge. Exposure to his insights into specific cases and into the workings of the law was an experience that young lawyers otherwise rarely obtain. These are some of the reasons why I regard Chief Justice Peter S. Popovich as a friend and a leader among leaders. It is with great professional and personal admiration that I present this tribute.