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Biography

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BIOGRAPHY

Douglas K. Amdahl was born in the Fillmore County community of Mabel, Minnesota on January 23, 1919. He was the youngest of three children and only son of Olean and Beulah Amdahl. His father was a harness maker and later a cobbler and shoe store owner; his mother was a school teacher for more than forty years.

Amdahl attended the University of Minnesota after graduating valedictorian of his Mabel High School class in 1937. He postponed his college education, however, during World War II and joined the U.S. Army in 1943. Amdahl served in the U.S. Army Air Corps until November 1945. His service included two years in the European theater. He was awarded seven battle stars—for his part in seven major battles—and a Certificate of Meritorious Service. He continued his education after the war and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1946 with a Bachelor of Business Administration. After one year teaching business in Mankato, he entered the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law. Douglas Amdahl had an exceptional law school career, receiving his Juris Doctorate *summa cum laude* in 1951. During his last three years of law school he also worked as the school's Assistant Registrar, a job he has described as including janitor, elevator operator, book salesman and scorekeeper—"I was a staff of one."

Following graduation from law school, Douglas Amdahl was admitted to practice in Minnesota and the U.S. District Court of Minnesota. He worked in private practice until 1955, during which time (1952–1955) he also worked as Registrar for the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law. In addition, he was an adjunct professor at his alma maters: from 1951 to 1965 he was at the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law (which joined with the St. Paul College of Law and became the William Mitchell College of Law in 1956) and at the University of Minnesota Law School from 1966 to 1980.

In 1955, Douglas Amdahl began working as an Assistant County Attorney in Hennepin County and as an attorney for the Board of County Commissioners, positions he held for six years. In 1961, he was appointed Judge of the Minneapolis

Municipal Court by former Governor Elmer L. Andersen. In less than one year, he was appointed Judge of the Fourth Judicial District. He remained a district judge for over seventeen years and, in addition, from 1973 to 1975, he served as Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial District.

In July 1980, Douglas Amdahl was appointed Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court by former Governor Al Quie. Eighteen months later, in December 1981, he was appointed by Governor Quie to succeed Robert J. Sheran as Chief Justice of the Court. He was later elected to a six-year term in that position commencing January 1985. In January 1989, Chief Justice Amdahl will retire from the court at the mandatory retirement age of seventy.

Throughout his career, Chief Justice Amdahl has been active in a variety of legal affairs and he has an impressive and varied list of accomplishments to his credit, including, former President of the District Judges Association; former chairman of the Minnesota News Council; original member of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission and both a trial court and appellate court representative on the Commission; author of Rules for Sentencing Hearing Procedures under the Sentencing Guidelines; Guggenheim Fellow, Sentencing Principles Seminar, Yale University in 1984; member and secretary of the Board of Trustees at William Mitchell College of Law; graduate, former faculty member and former faculty adviser, National College of the State Judiciary; Board Member, National Board of Trial Advocacy; member of the Delta Theta Phi law fraternity; member of the American and Minnesota Bar Associations; and Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Judges. Douglas Amdahl was also the recipient of the Outstanding Alumnus Award from William Mitchell College of Law in 1984, the Pro Bono Publico Award from the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition in 1984 and the Professional Excellence Award from the Minnesota State Bar Association in 1986.

Chief Justice Amdahl has also been dedicated to improving judicial administration in Minnesota. He campaigned for and was instrumental in creating and organizing the Minnesota Court of Appeals. He completed the consolidation of the district and municipal courts in Minnesota. He helped to secure additional trial judgeships and continues to work for additional appellate judgeships. And Chief Justice Amdahl helped to se-

cure legislative funding for the new Minnesota Judicial Center, a building which will eventual provide offices for the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the state law library, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, the Board of Professional Responsibility and the Office of the Court Administrator.

Douglas Amdahl married Phyllis J. Lampland in April 1949. They have two children: Faith and Charles. Chief Justice Amdahl is an avid hunter, fisherman and also enjoys carpentry (he is well-known for his “mosquito houses”) and conservation.

