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A TRIBUTE TO DOUGLAS K. AMDAHL

SAMUEL L. HANSON†

Chief Justice Amdahl is so multifaceted that any tribute could discuss him in the context of dozens of roles—lawyer, educator, judge, administrator, political activist, community leader, public servant, husband, father, sportsman, adventurer, humanitarian, valued friend, etc. I would like to focus on three of those roles because of their particular significance to the legal community.

I first encountered Judge Amdahl as a *legal educator*. In 1961, while a Minneapolis Municipal Judge, Judge Amdahl was continuing his long-standing relationship to William Mitchell College of Law as a trustee and as a faculty member, then teaching agency and partnership. His dedication to the school goes back several years to one of William Mitchell's predecessors, the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law, where, as a student, he began to take on significant leadership roles. He delights in telling stories about the informality of admissions while he was acting as Registrar. Since that time he has been an active participant in each of the school's major milestones—the merger of the St. Paul College of Law and the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law in 1956; the construction of the College's first building at 2100 Summit Avenue in 1958; and the acquisition of the College's new campus at 875 Summit Avenue in 1976. Judge Amdahl continues to be instrumental in the daily affairs of the school and its major efforts in developing the Warren E. Burger Library.

As a teacher, Chief Justice Amdahl served the dual function of educator and role model. His sincere interest in students, good humor and dedication to scholarship has undoubtedly impacted hundreds of practicing attorneys who were former students. For a freshman student in 1961, amidst the mysteries of law school and legal education, the experience of Judge Amdahl's class was refreshing and inspiring. Here was a

† Partner in the law firm of Briggs and Morgan; former clerk for Chief Justice Amdahl (1965) when the Chief Justice served as a Hennepin County District Court Judge; and former clerk for Justice Robert J. Sheran (1966).

teacher who was unpretentious and clearly sympathetic to the needs of a student body that, for one reason or another, had chosen the regimen of a night law school. He never lost track of his roots.

Chief Justice Amdahl's dedication to the advancement of the *judiciary* has spanned his entire career as a member of the bar. With every judicial assignment he has devoted his energy and diplomacy to significant reforms. I had the pleasure of being the Judge's first law student clerk, as a part of an experimental program in 1965 which resulted from recommendations of the Citizens League. Judge Amdahl was one of two Hennepin County District Court Judges who agreed to undertake this experiment as an effort in expanding the staff resources available to each judge. Just prior to this time, Judge Amdahl had taken a rotation as the Judge of Family Court and was instrumental in restructuring it in ways that have made it a prototype throughout the state.

Judge Amdahl went on to become Chief Judge of the Hennepin County District Court, an acknowledged leader of the district court judges across the state, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and its Chief Justice. In each role, he established substantial, far-reaching goals and was untiring in his efforts to achieve them. His role in the establishment of the Court of Appeals and in the development of the new Judicial Center will contribute significantly to the judiciary in Minnesota for years to come.

Those who have had the pleasure to know and work with Judge Amdahl will undoubtedly recall his contribution as legal educator and judge. On a personal level, even more importance will be given to his contributions as a *humanitarian* and *valued friend*. No matter how heavy the demands of public service, Judge Amdahl has always been available as advisor and counselor. He is accessible. He takes a personal interest in the lives of those about him, their families, their goals, and their concerns. One of the tremendous employee benefits, available to former law clerks of Judge Amdahl, is the knowledge that he will be following your progress in the practice of law and will be available as advisor and counselor as the need arises.