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In Memoriam Justice Evan A. Evans

On July 7, 1948, Hon. Evan Albert Evans, late Senior Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, died at Spring Green, Wisconsin, the community in which he was born on March 19, 1876, and his name should forever appear conspicuously upon the Roll of Wisconsin's illustrious sons who devoted their lives to God, Country and Mankind.

After graduation in liberal arts at the University of Wisconsin in 1897, he obtained his law degree from the same institution in 1899, and after a short period of law practice at Omaha, Nebraska, he moved to Baraboo, the county seat of his native county, and practiced there for sixteen years until President Wilson appointed him, a life-long but not a particularly politically active Democrat, to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, where he served from May 17, 1916, during very colorful and historic times, including World Wars I and II, the Prohibition Era, the Great Depression, and their aftermaths—verily “times which try men’s very souls”. In 1939, a petition, circulated without his knowledge or consent, was signed by more than 1700 leading members of the Bar of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, requesting his appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Beginning with his college days, he developed ever increasing renown as a debater and orator. A diligent reader, a profound but open-minded and direct thinker and philosopher, and an avid student of history and constitutional government,—he was known as a most prolific worker, having written over 1,000 opinions. As a practicing country-lawyer, he was recognized as a highly capable and ethical criminal lawyer, and, although having had little experience as a patent-lawyer, after his elevation to the Bench, he obtained recognition throughout the country as an outstanding jurist in that field of law. Born on a farm, he remained a life-long lover of the soil and farming which, no doubt, accounted for his possessing in the highest degree that admirable quality known as the “common touch”, which enabled him to mingle with the Bar, make and hold friends, yet play no favorites and retain the respect of all.

—E. J. KOELZER