

**The Honorable Archie Gingold - Ramsey County District Court Judge
(1908-2006)**

Minnesota's first juvenile court was established in Ramsey County in 1905, just three years before its best-known and longest-serving judge, Archie Gingold, was born. He presided over juvenile court from 1960 until his retirement in 1978 and will be forever remembered for his unwavering commitment to children and their families.

To commemorate the 100-year anniversary of Minnesota's juvenile courts, the Minnesota Supreme Court established a Centenary Committee in 2005. The energetic committee sponsored a re-enactment of a landmark 1967 U.S. Supreme Court Case entitled In Re Gault; organized a comprehensive symposium on juvenile law at William Mitchell Law School; worked with the William Mitchell Law Review to publish papers from the symposium; commissioned the creation of "storyboards" to commemorate the history of juvenile courts through language and pictures which will travel throughout the state of Minnesota; and drafted a set of aspirational "principles" to guide those working to improve the juvenile justice system well into the future. These principles would have resonated loudly and clearly with Judge Gingold and include the following:

- To secure for each child ... judicial procedures which offer meaningful help to families, including protection from physical and mental harm, and access to services that are respectful, culturally relevant, and responsive to ... families; the paramount consideration for the Court is the best interests of the child, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the child has a safe and stable home.
- To develop ... courts that encourage law-abiding, sober and productive lifestyles for all youth...
- To hold juvenile offenders accountable to their victims and to the community...

- To increase public safety by supporting effective delinquency prevention strategies and by creating alternatives to confinement that will reduce recidivism.

The Committee and its initial chairman, former Chief Justice Robert Sheran, determined early on that it would assure recognition of two particularly well-known juvenile court pioneers, Lindsay Arthur from Hennepin County District Court and Judge Gingold from Ramsey County District Court. The Committee knew from the start that its efforts would be incomplete if it did not acknowledge the contributions of these outstanding jurists.

Except for service in the Army during World War II, Judge Gingold spent his whole life in St. Paul. He graduated from Mechanic Arts High School, Macalester College and the first College of St. Thomas Law School. He was the last surviving member of the original law school that went out of existence in the 1930's. It has, of course, re-emerged in recent years as University of St. Thomas School of Law. Judge Gingold was admitted to law practice in 1933. Following his return from military service in 1945, he married Helen Mae Swanson and resumed his law practice. Judge Gingold and Helen raised three wonderful daughters, Mimi Gingold, Sandra Iverson and Carla Feldhamer.

Judge Gingold's distinguished judicial career began when he was appointed to the St. Paul Municipal Court Bench in 1954 by Governor C. Elmer Anderson. He was subsequently appointed to the Ramsey County District Court bench in 1960 by Governor Orville Freeman and presided as a trial court judge until he retired in 1978 at age 70. Even then, he served the district court for another ten years in various capacities at the request of his colleagues and its chief judge.

Judge Gingold loved St. Paul. At his memorial service at Mount Zion Temple in March 2006, speakers recounted story after story of his contributions not only to the court system, but also to the community generally. Several old-timers remembered his practice of reminding every first-time offender in juvenile court that the "bus for Red Wing" was parked right outside the courthouse, ready to take the youngster away if he did not promise to mend his ways.

St. Thomas University Magazine paid a fitting tribute to Judge Gingold in a beautiful 2001 article describing him as “Society’s Conscience.” That article provides great insight into Judge Gingold’s rich and diverse background. He is quoted there as saying “The law has a benevolent side to it whether we wish to acknowledge it or not. ...” Those who knew him would agree that “benevolent” was a word that fit Judge Archie Gingold to a T. Among his myriad accomplishments, he is remembered by many for his work in transforming adoptions from dry judicial proceedings to glorious celebrations that always involved cookies, Kool-Aid and photo opportunities involving Judge Gingold, court staff, proud mothers and fathers, and adoptive children and their siblings. He is believed to have handled more than 10,000 adoptions in his career.

Judge Gingold’s legacy in Ramsey County also includes group homes for troubled youth. He was instrumental in developing hundreds of homes that serve as temporary residence for truants, runaways and other children who require out of home placement but do not belong in formal detention.

In the Summer 2001 St. Thomas Magazine article, Judge Gingold is also quoted as saying "The law is an honorable profession and can do a lot of good, and there is always room for improvement." Just a few months prior to the publication of that magazine article, Supreme Court Justice Paul Anderson delivered a homily at Hamline Church in St. Paul in which he expressed the same sentiment and quoted from the text of Micah 6:8:

He has showed you, O man, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

But to do justice, and to love kindness

And to walk humbly with your God.

Judge Archie Gingold accomplished everything "required" of him ... and much more. A recent recipient of the nationally coveted Judge Edward Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award was described by his supporters as a person who enters a room and everyone there looks up to him and he looks down on no one. This was Archie Gingold as well.

Over the years, Judge Gingold received awards from Brandeis University, Ramsey County Bar Association, Mount Zion Temple, the St. Paul Intergroup Council of Alcoholics Anonymous, Goodwill Industries, the Minnesota Newspaper Association, St. Paul Area Association, and Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America. He also received an honorary Ph.D from the University of St. Thomas Law School and was recognized for his community contributions by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the Union Gospel Mission.

Judge Gingold was involved with the St. Paul United Way and the Bethesda Foundation. He served as President of the Haley Q. Brown Settlement House and was a board member for the St. Paul-Ramsey Mental Health Board and for the Boys and Girls Clubs of St. Paul.

Judge Gingold was predeceased by his wife and, in addition to his three daughters, is survived by a brother, Bernard, eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. He was a great judge and a great person. He will be missed by everyone but his contributions to juvenile justice will live on forever.

Submitted by

The Honorable John B. Van de North, Jr.

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