

# 120 YEARS OF JUDICIAL LEGACY

## IOWA'S EIGHTH CIRCUIT JUDGES 1869 - 1989



### Iowa's Eighth Circuit Judges 1869 - 1989

	U.S. Circuit Courts for the Eighth Circuit	U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
John F. Dillon	1869-1879	
George W. McCrary	1879-1884	
Walter I. Smith	1911	1911-1922
William S. Kenyon		1922-1933
Seth Thomas		1935-1962
Martin D. Van Oosterhout		1954-1979
Roy L. Stephenson		1971-1982
George G. Fagg		1982-2015

This exhibit honors Iowa's Eighth Circuit judges who have passed away. These distinguished men from Iowa—lawyers, statesmen, and judges—all rose to the highest court in the United States Eighth Circuit due to their intellect, integrity, and legal acumen.

Their home state of Iowa enjoys the historic distinction of producing the first two appointments in a long line of accomplished and respected federal judges on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

When Congress established circuit court judgeships for the Eighth Circuit in 1869, the first two appointments went to Iowans John F. Dillon and George W. McCrary. During the 120-year span of 1869 to 1989, eight of the 48 judges appointed to the appellate courts of the Eighth Circuit were from Iowa.

Dillon and McCrary were appointed to the U.S. Circuit Courts for the Eighth Circuit, the predecessor court to the court of appeals. Iowan Walter I. Smith, appointed in 1911 after the creation in 1891 of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, but before the circuit courts were abolished at the beginning of 1912, was appointed to both courts.

Smith's seat on the court of appeals, created by the Act of January 31, 1903, began a long succession of Iowans on the court. This seat actually began with Willis Van Devanter of Wyoming, then part of the burgeoning Eighth Circuit. Succeeding Van Devanter up to 1989, with the exception of the nine-month term of Charles B. Faris of Missouri, were these appointments from Iowa: Walter I. Smith in 1911, William S. Kenyon in 1922, Seth Thomas in 1935, Martin D. Van Oosterhout in 1954, Roy L. Stephenson in 1971, and George G. Fagg in 1982.

### 4th Seat on U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, 1903-1989

Created by Act of January 31, 1903, 32 Stat. 791

Willis Van Devanter  
1903-1910  
Wyoming

Walter I. Smith  
1911-1922  
Iowa

William S. Kenyon  
1922-1933  
Iowa

Charles B. Faris  
1935-1938  
Missouri

Seth Thomas  
1935-1962  
Iowa

Martin Van Oosterhout  
1954-1979  
Iowa

Roy L. Stephenson  
1971-1982  
Iowa

George G. Fagg  
1982-2015  
Iowa

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The U.S. circuit courts, one for each judicial district during this period, served as both trial and appellate courts until 1891, when the Evarts Act created the U.S. courts of appeals and ended the appellate jurisdiction of the circuit courts. The U.S. circuit courts continued to serve as trial courts until January 1, 1912, when they were abolished according to the terms of the Judicial Code of 1911. Between 1891 and 1911, circuit judges were assigned to both the circuit courts and the appeals courts.

