

Judge Robert Van Pelt is Remembered

As His Grandson is Married in the Courtroom Where the Judge Once Presided

On September 21, 2017, Senior United States District Judge Richard Kopf was honored to marry Thomas Irvin and Heather Hunter in Courtroom No. 1, where Thomas' grandfather, the highly regarded and much beloved United States District Judge Robert Van Pelt once presided. Thomas' mother, and Judge Van Pelt's daughter, Margery "Midge" Irvin, attended with other well-wishers.

Pictured below are Thomas, Heather and Midge standing next to the portrait of Judge Van Pelt that hangs adjacent to Courtroom No. 1 in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Judge Kopf recalled that Judge Van Pelt was one of the judges who presided when Kopf was sworn in as a United States Magistrate Judge in 1987 prior to Kopf's appointment as a United States District Judge in 1992. Among many other services he rendered to the judiciary writ large, Judge Van Pelt served on the Judicial Conference's Committee to Implement the Federal Magistrates Act.

Judge Van Pelt was born on September 9, 1897, in Gosper County, Nebraska. The judge was nominated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on May 22, 1957, to a seat vacated by John W. Delehant. He was confirmed by the Senate on June 11, 1957, and received his commission on June 13, 1957. The judge assumed senior status on May 5, 1970. That year, the Nebraska Law Review dedicated an issue to Van Pelt, who had graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 1922. His service terminated on April 27, 1988, due to his death.

While on the federal bench, Judge Van Pelt served on the committee that drafted the Federal Rules of Evidence and was named Special Master by the Supreme Court for four boundary disputes (*Texas v. Louisiana*, 426 U.S. 465 (1976), *California v. Nevada*, 447 U.S. 125 (1980), *Ohio v. Kentucky*, 444 U.S. 335 (1980), and *Kentucky v. Indiana*, 474 U.S. 1 (1985)).