

ROBERT EAKIN

Robert Eakin was born on March 15, 1848, in Elgin, Illinois. He was the son of Stewart B. and Catherine (McEldowney) Eakin. His early life was passed partly at Elgin and partly at Bloom, Illinois, where he attended the public schools.

With his parents he came to Oregon in 1866. He entered Willamette University at Salem and was graduated in 1873. He studied law in the office of Hon. George B. Dorris at Eugene, Oregon, in 1873-74, and was admitted to the Bar of this court in 1874. On June 21, 1876, he was married to Mary Walker, who survived him.

He entered upon the practice of his profession at Union, Oregon, immediately after his admission to the Bar, and continued until March, 1895, when he was appointed by Governor William P. Lord, Judge of the Circuit Court for the Eighth Judicial District. He was elected to this office in 1896, reelected in 1902, served until 1906, when he took his seat upon the bench of the Supreme Court by virtue of the votes of the people, to which position he was again elected in 1912, continuing in the service of the state until 1917, when he laid the ermine down, due to the insidious effects of the disease which later claimed his life.

Justice Eakin's home life was an uninterrupted period of mutual love and comfort. To this home there came five children, namely: Ethel, who died in infancy; Georgia B., who died in early womanhood; Robert S., of the law firm of Crawford and Eakin, of La Grande, Oregon; Gertrude and Harold Eakin of Salem, Oregon, the latter being with the Ladd and Bush Bank of Salem, Oregon. His wife, and brothers Herbert Eakin of Cottage Grove, Oregon; Walter J. Eakin of Astoria, Oregon; Judge James A. Eakin of Astoria, Oregon; and sister, Mrs. Calvin Hannah of Eugene, Oregon, and Mrs. Catharine McQueen of Portland, Oregon, survived him.

Early in his life he became a member of the Presbyterian Church. He organized a Sunday school at Union, Oregon, shortly after his arrival in 1875, and was continuously its superintendent for twenty-nine years. In the church he was an active member serving many years as elder and in other ways in the consecrated and devoted service to his Master. His religion was not ritualistic and formal, but a deep, conscientious conviction and well illustrated by his daily life.

As a man, Justice Eakin was modest, plain and unassuming. He abhorred that which was evil and cleaved to that which was good. He was a man of great kindness, charity and sympathy. He honored, revered and respected the courts before whom he practiced and by his manner of life claimed the friendship and respect of his brethren of the Bar.

He loved music. He loved to sit in the enchanted circle of home,

surrounded by his family and friends and listen to the "concord of sweet sounds" from the hallowed Gospel tunes, telling of Christian faith and hope, to the majestic overtures, rhapsodies and symphonies of the masters rendered by those of his children who survived childhood.

As a lawyer, he was devoted to the interests of his clients. His arguments were profound and logical and his conclusions were reached only after studious research among principles and precedents. He shared the formative period of our judicial history, participating in many cases involving principles of law "as a matter of first impression."

As a judge, he was patient, courteous, dignified and firm. He brought to the bench a ripe experience, gathered from a busy professional life, relating to the numerous and varied legal principles, the application of which to the industrial development of this state have been so vital and essential to the general welfare.

His opinions have enriched the judicial literature of the profession, rarely containing dicta. His style was simple, direct and forceful. His judgments were tempered with mercy and he always kept in mind a court's great objective--that decision must harmonize with the will of the law and not the will of the judge.

He was loyal to the law. He had no peculiar economic views requiring artificial distinctions and specious analogies whereby to modify the fundamentals of our jurisprudence.