

Judge Gerald B. Fluhrer 1878-1925

10-4-13

Hon. Gerald B. Fluhrer was born in Grand Rapids, Mich. in 1878 to Charles A. Fluhrer and Julia Bishop Fluhrer. There he received all of his primary education and some of his secondary education. In 1895 he moved with his family to Albion, where his father had been called and accepted the first pastorate of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church, which was dedicated on Jan. 31 of that year.

Gerald Fluhrer graduated from the Albion Union Free School in the class of 1897. He then entered Cornell University in the fall of that year and graduated in 1901 with an A.B. degree. He was then accepted at the Buffalo Law School and was admitted to the bar on Nov. 17, 1903 in Rochester. He later formed a partnership with Herbert T. Reed in Albion. This partnership eventually included David A. White with the firm being known as Fluhrer, Reed, and White. In 1922 Mr. White withdrew from the firm to enter into business for himself in Medina. Mr. Fluhrer was a staunch Democrat in his political views.

In the spring of 1919 Governor Alfred E. Smith appointed Gerald B. Fluhrer Orleans County

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Judge and Surrogate upon the death of Judge Fred Downs of Medina. In the fall of 1919 Judge Fluhrer ran on the Democratic ticket for the Judgeship and was elected by a 78-vote plurality to a six-year term beginning Jan. 1, 1920. This was after a bitterly waged political campaign against the Republican candidate Bertram E. Harcourt of Medina. It was indeed quite an accomplishment for a Democrat to get elected by a county-wide

vote, particularly at that period of time when an overwhelming majority of electors were registered Republicans. It was understood that he was going to be nominated by the Democratic Party to succeed himself. Judge Fluhrer had a real sense of obligation and duty to Orleans County that caused him to decline an appointment to the Supreme Court bench which would have interfered with the job he considered he owed the people who had elected him County Court Judge. It was noted in 1925 when he died that "He possessed a most marked individuality and character. He was loyal to his family, his church, his party, his profession, and his country, and because of those qualities he was loving and loved."

Judge Fluhrer was a most successful attorney and served as Democrat chairman of Orleans County for a number of years as well as state committeeman. He represented his party at several national Democratic conventions. His reputation as an attorney and jurist went far beyond the boundaries of Orleans County. However, on the local scene he took a keen interest in many aspects of the community.

He was president of the Orleans County Child Welfare Association; was a member of the Orleans County Bar Association; the Dye Hose Company; the Foresters of America; Past Master of Renovation Lodge #97 F & AM. Past Exalted Ruler of the Albion Lodge of Elks, a member of the Albion Chamber of Commerce, a director of the Citizens National Bank and a trustee of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church.

Although he achieved much distinction and honor in his profession and community, his untimely death perhaps prevented him from receiving even greater distinction. Shortly before his death he married Mrs. Herbert (Lillian) Keown, a young widow. She and her son Herbert Keown, Jr., and Julia Bishop Fluhrer, his mother, and a brother, Howard Fluhrer were his immediate survivors.

The Orleans American newspaper reported that the Universalist Church was packed for his funeral and that the corners at East Park and Main Streets in Albion were crowded with people. It was estimated that over 2,000 attended the funeral of this esteemed gentleman.