

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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JUDGE FRANCIS A. STURGES 1889-1967

"And let the counsel of thine own heart stand: For there is no man more faithful unto thee than it; for a man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in an high tower."

-Ecclesiasticus

Francis A. Sturges was born in the Town of Carlton and grew up in the hamlet of Kenyonville. He attended the Kenyonville District School and the Waterport Union Free School before attending Albion High School from where he graduated in 1909. At that time if you passed a New York State teachers examination you were considered qualified to teach without

any further education. Having passed such an examination, he then taught in the Carlton District School for one year to earn some money before attending Wesleyan University in Connecticut where he completed a degree in 1914.

During the school year 1914 and 1915 he taught in Albion High School where he also coached football and baseball. In September 1915 he entered the Albany Law School. His education in law however, was interrupted when World War I came along. During this he served in the 307th Field Artillery from September 1917 to August 1919. He then returned to the Albany Law School where he graduated in June 1920. In September of that year he was admitted to the bar.

He then spent a year with the Buffalo law firm of Morey, Bosley and Morey but returned to Albion in 1921 to enter into partnership with John C. Knickerbocker. Mr. Knickerbocker served as Orleans County District Attorney from 1910 through 1915 and had been the prosecuting attorney in the famous Stielow case. The partnership with Knickerbocker continued until he died in 1929 at which time Mr. Sturges then practiced law on his own.

For several years he served as Village of Albion police justice. In the Fall of 1950 he was elected Orleans County Judge and Surrogate assuming those duties on January 1, 1951. In 1956 he was again elected to another six-year term, but retired after three years in 1959. His predecessor in the position had been Judge Charles G. Signor who served from 1943 to 1950. His successor was Judge J. Kenneth Serve of Medina.

Judge Sturges was active in many community organizations during his life time. He was President of the Orleans County Bar Association and a member of the State Bar Association. He was a charter member and Past Commander of Sheret Post 35 American Legion as well as a charter member and Past President of the Albion Lions Club. He had been a member of the Albion Town Club and a former member of the Albion Board of Education from 1946-1953. For many years he was an active member of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church where he had been a trustee. At one time he served as President of the Orleans County Baseball League. His wife was the former Lucy Mack. They had two children who are David M. Sturges and Mrs. Nancy Woodcook.