

December 2019

A Tribute to Chief Justice Blume

Glenn Parker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/wlj>

Recommended Citation

Glenn Parker, *A Tribute to Chief Justice Blume*, 17 Wyo. L.J. 89 (1963)

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/wlj/vol17/iss2/1>

This Special Section is brought to you for free and open access by Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wyoming Law Journal by an authorized editor of Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship.

A TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JUSTICE BLUME*

The retirement of Wyoming's eminent Chief Justice Fred H. Blume will mark the end of a most unusual era in the administration of justice in this State. In the two decades following 1910 a number of able lawyers were selected for the bench while relatively young and served with distinction for many years. Such names as V. J. Tidball, James H. Burgess, of the district bench, Ralph Kimball, William A. Riner, of the supreme court, and Harry P. Ilsley, who served on both, will long be remembered; but dean of all, even before his length of service became pre-eminent, was Judge Blume. He came to the supreme court on April 23, 1921, and has served ever since, with practically no time out for either illness or vacation. He was proud of his health and maintained it with characteristic German care, and he felt little need for vacations because study was his greatest joy and for diversion he read and reread a cellarful of western paperbacks. As far as we have been able to ascertain, his is the longest continuous service on a state supreme court. Of greater significance, however, has been the depth of his preception, the soundness of his judgment, and the kindness of his approach to every human relationship with which he has had contact.

Judge Blume was born in West Germany in 1875 and at the age of twelve came to visit a brother in Illinois and decided to stay in the United States. He worked on farms, attended country schools, and later engaged in various occupations in neighboring towns. Some four years later as a migrant laborer in the Minnesota and Dakota wheatfields he stopped by chance in Audubon, Iowa, and was befriended by a kind lawyer who persuaded him to stay, work in his office, and attend school. The determined young man quickly added English to his repertoire of German and French and became an outstanding student in Audubon High School. At the University of Iowa he excelled in debate and oratory and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation he studied law in the office of his benefactor, was admitted to the Iowa Bar just before the turn of the century, practiced there for several years, and was both a justice of the peace and county and prosecuting attorney. In 1905 he moved to Sheridan where he engaged in an active practice, taking time out however, for various community activities including service in the Wyoming Senate.

Judge Blume's earliest opinions indicated his great potential in the judicial field and in over forty years he has become known as one of the ablest jurists in the Nation. Numerous references may be found to his opinions in the works of various authors, including Wigmore, and in the American Law Reports, which have annotated sixty-four of his cases. Thus, his contribution while of great benefit here is not limited to this jurisdiction.

*By Justice Glenn Parker at the request of the students and faculty of the University of Wyoming College of Law.

Always fluent and able in the languages, Judge Blume became particularly interested in Roman law and on this subject has accumulated an extensive library which he has arranged to give to the University of Wyoming law school. He has translated many works on the subject, including the Justinian Code, and in 1929 presented lectures on Roman law at Northwestern University.

Almost paralleling Judge Blume's interest in his fellowmen and the laws by which they are governed has been his affection for his dogs who in turn have been with him constantly, both at home and the office: Bozo, a spaniel; Rocket, a Labrador; Baron, a weimaraner; and now Bingo, a German shepherd.

Whether the principal reason for his success lies in his inherent abilities, his amazing ambition, or his love for the law, no one can be sure; but the lawyers in his jurisdiction and the judges with whom he has worked are unanimous in their view that the record of this great man in his field will probably never be excelled.