



W O R C E S T E R

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

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Harry J. Meleski, at 82; Was Former City Solicitor

Harry J. Meleski, 82, former Worcester city solicitor, died yesterday in Hahnemann Hospital. He lived at 33 Hill Top Circle.

Mr. Meleski joined the city's law department part-time in 1945, after a career as a trial lawyer in the city. He became department head in 1951, serving there until he retired in 1968.

In 1968, he was presented the 13th annual Quo Vadis Club Civic Award for community service at a dinner in West Boylston. Shortly after his retirement, he was tendered a dinner at Pleasant Valley Country Club, Sutton, by the Massachusetts City Solicitor and Town Council Association. Mr. Meleski was president of the association in 1965-1966.

He was born in Holyoke. In a Worcester Sunday Telegram interview in 1963, Mr. Meleski said, however, that he always felt he was a native of Worcester.

Graduated From Clark

He attended Ward Street and Millbury Street grammar schools and was graduated from Classical High School and Clark University. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Clark University in 1919.

He attended Harvard Law School for one year and received his law degree from Boston University Law School in 1922. He was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1922.

He was an Army veteran of World Wars I and II.

In 1926, he was admitted to the practice of law in the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court and Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Meleski served as an assistant U.S. attorney from 1931 to 1932 and, by appointment of several governors of the Commonwealth, was a public administrator from 1929 to 1945.



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During the 1940s, he also served part-time, without pay, as legal aide to the Worcester Veterans Rehabilitation Clinic. He was a former public administrator for Worcester County, a former member of the Governor's Committee on Civilian Defense, a member of the American Legion and a trustee of the Lucretia Bancroft Scholarship Fund.

Most Memorable Case

Asked in the same Sunday Telegram interview if he won or lost his first case as a lawyer, Mr. Meleski said he got a not guilty verdict for his client.

He recalled that his most memorable experience as an attorney was the case of Pawloski vs. Hess. This, he said, started out as an ordinary automobile accident case and wound up as an important decision in the realm of conflict of laws. It went to the state's Supreme Judicial Court twice and was finally decided by a unanimous opinion written by Justice Butler in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Meleski said it was the decision that settled state court jurisdiction over nonresident motorists and put extra-territorial coverage in compulsory motor vehicle policies to cover motorists of this commonwealth when they drive beyond its borders. He said it was a memorable experience because of the long litigation (five years) and the complexity of the questions raised on behalf of the defendant by insurers and other interested in automobile travel.

Asked if he had any advice for the young man seeking a career as a lawyer, Mr. Meleski said it seemed to him there was no profession offering greater opportunity for service to one's fellow man. "If you can envision devotion of a lifetime for such service, then law is your profession and you will be happy in it."

Asked if he had ever been a candidate for public office, Mr. Meleski, said: "Yes, I ran for a seat in the City Council quite a few years ago. I ran on the Republican ticket in a Democratic ward and almost made it." He was the author of articles on jurisdiction over nonresident motorists and conflicts of law.

He was a member of the Michigan and Connecticut bars as well as that of Massachusetts.

Alexander Memorial Chapel, 52 Ward St., is directing funeral arrangements.