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# A Tribute to Douglas K. Amdahl

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## A TRIBUTE TO DOUGLAS K. AMDAHL

STEVEN E. RAU†

When the William Mitchell Law Review called me and asked me to write a few paragraphs about Chief Justice Amdahl for the issue commemorating his stewardship of the Minnesota State Courts, I quickly agreed. Unfortunately, the task became more difficult to write something that didn't sound so much like the memorials that punctuate every other volume of Federal Supplement. Ultimately, when writing or describing an individual that you love, admire, and respect, the only words that come to mind are superlatives.

Unquestionably, the one-year period from August of 1983 to August of 1984, when I served as law clerk to the Chief Justice, was one of the happiest times in my short life. The Chief and the satisfaction of working for him were the reasons for my year of bliss. During this year and in the years that followed, I learned of the joy of fishing for smallmouth bass in southern Minnesota. No one, however, enjoyed those short, quick tugs on the fishing line more than the Chief. Each fish he caught elicited the respond of a five-year-old boy catching his first fish.

I also learned (or attempted to anyway) the importance of detail. After furiously drafting a bench memo or a draft opinion for the Chief, I would spend hours searching for misspelled words, misplaced commas, improper cites, etc. Then, after I was certain that I had caught every single error, I would hand my product into the Chief. The Chief, a stickler for detail, almost inevitably would find a typo, a misspelled word or a misplaced comma if one was to be found. The logic and structure of the Chief's opinions were also a trademark. He was a patient teacher and a judge who always asked himself whether a result was fair.

Chief Justice Douglas K. Amdahl has devoted himself to the courts of this state and the people of this state for over twenty years. He has accepted his tasks with cheerfulness and has never hesitated to work late into the night. I hope that the

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**Chief takes the time after leaving the bench to fish all the streams and ponds in Minnesota that he's always wanted to fish and hunt the Elk in Montana that he's always wanted to hunt.**