

1998

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Recommended Citation

Heaney, Gerald W., "A Tribute to Judge Myron H. Bright" (1998). *Minnesota Law Review*. 1382.
<https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/mlr/1382>

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A Tribute to Judge Myron H. Bright

Gerald W. Heaney†

I stand in awe of Judge Myron Bright. More than any other judge with whom I have had an opportunity to work for the last three decades, Judge Bright has the unique ability to stand fast on his convictions and yet maintain good personal and professional relationships with other judges and lawyers with whom he disagrees. This talent has enabled Judge Bright to be a positive and mediating influence on our court. I also stand in awe of Judge Bright's prodigious energy, which has enabled him to carry a full load on our court, to sit with and contribute to other circuits, and to be a nationally recognized teacher in judicial administration and trial practice. I do not know how he has been able to combine all of these activities and still have time for family and friends.

Judge Bright was a product of the Minnesota Iron Range and the Great Depression of the 1930s. During his early years, the Iron Range was a great melting pot of Minnesota. The miners were Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Italian, and Finnish immigrants; the bosses were English and Scottish; and the public servants were Irish. The magic was that they all got along and learned to live and work together, and to respect each other's culture. Myron's father and mother, and his family, were friends of all of these men and women, and, undoubtedly, that experience contributed to his great ability to move among people in every walk of life today. The Depression also had a great influence on Myron. His family, along with most families on the Iron Range, lived through difficult times, but they learned compassion, understanding, and the need for all people to work together. Judge Bright's background is also important to his seminal opinion in the *Reserve Mining*¹ case. No one knew better than Judge Bright of the contributions that the mining industry made to the people of the Iron Range and

† Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

1. *Reserve Mining Co. v. EPA*, 514 F.2d 492 (8th Cir. 1975).

no one knew better than he how important it was that the industry operate in an environmentally sound manner.

I cannot add to the words that Judge Lay has written with respect to Judge Bright's enormous contributions in the field of employment discrimination. Suffice-it-to-say, in my mind, Judge Bright has, more than any other judge on our court, made immense contributions to this field of law.

One cannot speak of Myron without also speaking of Fritzie, his wife. Undoubtedly, she has been a major factor, not only in Myron's personal life, but also in enabling him to be the scholar, mediator, and teacher that he is.

The University of Minnesota Law School and the *Minnesota Law Review* are to be congratulated for their recognition of Judge Bright. No finer judge has ever served on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.