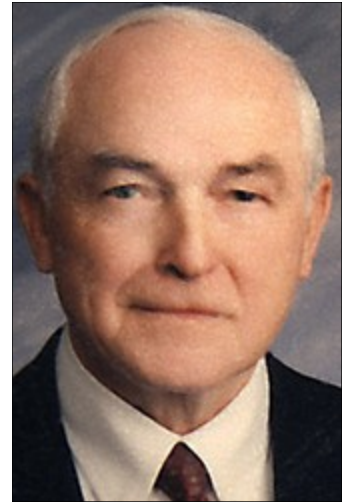


Mueller remembered for service to community

New Ulm lawyer died Tuesday at age 89

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By Kevin Sweeney Journal Editor



NEW ULM - Al Mueller, an Arlington-area native who came to New Ulm to practice law and left an indelible imprint on the community, died Tuesday at the Oak Hills Living Center, where he had been living since being hospitalized with cancer a short time ago.

Mueller, 89, was born on the family farm in the Arlington area.

In a 2007 interview with The Journal's Serra Muscatello, Mueller said he remembers being impressed by Arlington's only attorney at the time, Olaf Vesta. He said he made it his goal to be an attorney himself.

After graduating from Arlington High School he attended Gustavus Adolphus College, graduating in 1943. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946, then returned to Minnesota to attend the St. Paul College of Law and fulfill his childhood dream of becoming an attorney. Admitted to the bar in 1952, he arrived in New Ulm in 1955, following his sister, Ellen, who was a teacher at New Ulm High school.

"She would give glowing reports about how she liked New Ulm and the people," Mueller said.

Former Mayor Joel Albrecht recalled Wednesday that he and Mueller moved to town about the same time, and both roomed at Mrs. Brey's home at 2nd North and Washington streets.

"We became fast friends," Albrecht said.

"He is probably one of the cornerstones of New Ulm," Albrecht said of Mueller. "The contributions he made, financially as well as his time and talent, supporting various organizations with their legal work and drawing contracts and agreements, was truly unbelievable. Mueller Park is obviously a testament to his belief in community and giving back to community."

Mueller Park was built in 2001 on the site of the former Artstone factory. Mueller donated \$500,000 to the city to build a second baseball park on the site, just down the hill from Johnson Park and Johnson Field. The ball field has helped New Ulm host several large baseball tournaments in the summer.

Baseball was one of Mueller's great loves. Jim Bastian writes about Mueller's contributions to the local baseball community in today's sports page. He was active in and served many other groups, such as the American Legion, the Lions, New Ulm Country Club, New Ulm Chamber of Commerce, New Ulm Club, Farm-City Hub Club, Lind House, and the Brown and Sibley County historical societies.

Mueller was well-known for his sunny personality.

"He was the kind of guy where I never saw him in a mood where he didn't like someone or got mad or disruptive," said Terry Dempsey, a fellow attorney and long-time friend. "He had this ability to never get out of sorts or get mad about something, and there are a lot of things that can make you mad in a law practice. But he got a lot of things done because of his great attitude. He had an idea of how things should be, and they usually worked out for him."

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Kay Simpson, the Sertoma Club's sponsorship chair, recalled in an article at the time that "He's like so many of the winners that we've had... They're so humble, never thinking that they deserve the recognition."

Up until the time he was hospitalized, Mueller continued to serve people in New Ulm, spending time at the New Ulm Community Center to provide legal advice to senior citizens.

Pat Lowther, his law partner for several years at the end of his career, recalls a speech he gave when Mueller was inducted into the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame.

"My comments were along the line that 'We lawyers like to be known as lawyers, as Trial Lawyers, as Super Lawyers, as lawyers first and men and women second. But Al was never like that. Al was always personable and caring. His great testament is that he was always a fine, fine man, a good man, and a successful lawyer to boot.'

"That's a fine legacy for a man like Al," said Lowther. "He will always be remembered first as a good man."