

**BERNARD ERICK “BERNIE” NORDLING**  
Lawrence, Kansas

Last year, the Tenth Circuit lost one of its most respected advocates and a founding member of the Tenth Circuit Historical Society. Bernard Erick “Bernie” Nordling died on August 31, 2005. A distinguished general practitioner in Hugoton, Kansas, Mr. Nordling was a partner in the law firm of Kramer, Nordling & Nordling. Among Mr. Nordling’s many accomplishments was his extensive representation of and work with the Southwest Kansas Royalty Owner’s Association from 1968 to 1994 – a time during which the courts in the Tenth Circuit were involved actively in the development of the Hugoton natural gas fields. Mr. Nordling was a pivotal player in that development. His careful and thoughtful professional approach to emerging and difficult questions related to natural resource law were among his exceptional contributions to the legal profession and to the circuit. Mr. Nordling’s love of the land and natural resources was apparent in every aspect of his practice and representation of his clients.

Mr. Nordling was a Kansan through and through. He was born in 1921 near Nekoma, Kansas. He graduated from McPherson High School and McPherson College, and with honors from the University of Kansas School of Law in 1949. Prior to attending law school, Mr. Nordling proudly served his country during World War II. From 1941 to 1944, he was a clerical employee with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C. and also served as a legal attache in the American Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a member of the United States Army from 1944 to 1946, Mr. Nordling also held a sensitive and important position in the Chief of Staff message center at the Pentagon in Washington. One

can only surmise the contents of the many messages that he was involved in sending and receiving during those critical years.

Mr. Nordling was the consummate professional. He not only served his clients, but he served the legal profession. When the call went out for original members of the Tenth Historical Society, Bernie Nordling was one of the first to sign up. Characteristic of all of his work throughout his career, he dedicated himself to serving the highest ideals of the profession and preserving its noble traditions. He was a member of the Judge Hugh Means Inn of Court in Lawrence, Kansas. He served with distinction the University of Kansas School of Law, the Kansas Bar Association, and the Southwest Kansas Bar Association.

In addition to his professional activities, Mr. Nordling was a member of the Hugoton United Methodist Church. He served on the Hugoton Grade School Board and Stevens County Library Board. He was a Boy Scouts of America Scoutmaster for twelve years. He also served his universities in a variety of ways. He was on the Board of Trustees of McPherson College, a member of the Kansas University Alumni Association, and the Kansas University Endowment Association. Beginning with his service in southwest Kansas and continuing after his move to Lawrence in 1993, Mr. Nordling was a valued member of his community.

Mr. Nordling was one of those lawyers who stands as a model of the highest standards of the profession. We were all greatly enriched by his professional contributions and his personal friendship. He will be greatly missed. Memorials should be designated to the Bernard E. Nordling Law Scholarship Fund with the University of Kansas Endowment Association or to the Bernard E. & Barbara Nordling Scholarship Fund with McPherson College.

Mr. Nordling is survived by his beloved wife, Barbara, four daughters, a son, a brother, fifteen grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The foregoing biography, written by Chief Judge Tacha, sets the pattern for other brief biographies to be written about lawyers, either living or deceased, practicing in the Tenth Circuit. The Historical Society of the Tenth Judicial Circuit will appreciate suggestions for other such biographies.*