

Reprinted by permission of the **Star Tribune** (Minneapolis, MN).

LEONARD LINDQUIST | 1912-2004

He guided his law firm as its 'spiritual father'

STAR TRIBUNE - SEP 11 '04
By **Trudi Hahn**
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Leonard Lindquist wanted lawyers to remember that they weren't just moneymakers. They had to contribute to their community, too.

Lindquist, the guiding spirit behind a prominent Minneapolis law firm who helped National Football League players and Minnesota nurses with their collective bargaining, died Friday following complications from a fall. He turned 92 on Sunday.

In 1946, he and Earl Larson, later a U.S. district judge, founded what became the

law firm of Larson, Loevinger, Lindquist, Freeman and Fraser — now Lindquist & Vennum — and put into practice what Everett Fraser, dean of the University of Minnesota Law School, taught them in the 1930s about public service.

"My father had talked about the importance of lawyers doing more than just practicing law — that they needed to take a lead role in solving problems of the community," said Don Fraser, who joined the firm in 1948 and later was elected state senator, U.S. representative and Minneapolis mayor.

LINDQUIST continues on B10



Provided by Lindquist & Vennum
Attorney Leonard Lindquist helped National Football League players and Minnesota nurses with their collective bargaining.

At 91, he still was a regular at his office downtown

Lindquist reinforced that idea every year with a speech at the firm's holiday party. "He was the spiritual father of the firm," Don Fraser said.

Lindquist, born in 1912 in Minneapolis, learned early to persevere in hard times. His father died in 1926, and the boy took long breaks from school to hitch rides on westbound freight trains, finding work in Montana and Washington.

Served in Navy

He worked through law school — not the norm at the time — and would stretch out for naps on one of the law-library tables, said Robert Sheran, a classmate and a partner before and after his time as chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court from 1974 to 1982. Another partner who served on the Minnesota Supreme Court, Lee Loevinger, was appointed in 1960 and left in 1961 to serve as a trustbuster in President John Kennedy's administration.

Lindquist served in the Navy during World War II. In the late 1940s, after forming the law firm, he was named legal counsel for the Minnesota Nurses Association when nurses were making \$50 a month, or \$380 in 2002 dollars.

"He said he saw no reason why professionals can't use collective bargaining, too," said Karen Patek, who met Lindquist when she joined the association in 1967 as senior staff specialist for labor relations.

In 1949, he was appointed to a vacancy on the powerful Railroad Warehouse Commission, with jurisdiction over a number of utilities, and served until 1952. It was the privately owned Minneapolis streetcar company that drew his fire. Some folks "were busy trying to steal, in effect, the assets. ... The voice that was raised to stop that was Leonard Lindquist's voice," Sheran said.

In 1954, three partners out of the eight-person firm were elected to office. Democrat Orville Freeman became governor and Democrat Don Fraser was elected to the state Senate. Lindquist, the lone Republican in the firm, was elected to the first of two terms as a state representative. He was the first to sponsor a bill that became a Minnesota law to ban racial discrimination in nursing homes.

"I remember Dad giving me a lecture — the color of skin didn't matter," said his son Kelley.

NFL contract

Leonard Lindquist didn't know anything about football when he helped the NFL Players Association negotiate their first labor contract in 1970, said Ed Garvey, a lawyer in Madison, Wis., who went from Lindquist's law firm to being the first executive director of the players' association.

But Lindquist believed he knew when skin color was being used to keep people out of jobs.

"The [NFL] argument was that the cognitive positions were reserved for whites," said Garvey. So there were no coaches or assistant coaches of color, no quarterbacks of color and no men of color at middle linebacker, considered the quarterback for the defense. In addition, each team set quotas to limit the number of black players.

The 1970 contract addressed the racial problems as well as questions of pay and freedom in moving from team to team, said Jim Marshall, a former Minnesota Viking. He and another former Viking, Oscar Reed, started forming in 1991 what is now Life's Missing Link, an inner-city, non-profit group that serves chronic truant youth and their families. Ground was broken this spring for apartments for youth in transition. The complex is named after Lindquist, the first member of the board of directors.

"He was probably the most genuine person that I've met in my lifetime," said Marshall.

In keeping with Lindquist's emphasis on pro bono work, his firm provides free legal services to the group.

"Leonard wanted to start a different kind of a law firm, and I think he succeeded," said Daryle Uphoff, managing partner.

Lindquist served as an arbitrator as late as this summer in Chicago and worked in his office daily until the past few weeks.

His constant interest in helping people "isn't something you pick out as an example because it was continual," said Gerald Magnuson of Edina, a retired partner. "That's how he led."

Lindquist's first wife, Elsie Kelley, died in 1979. In addition to his son, survivors include his second wife, Bernardine Ann Walsh of Brooklyn Center; sons Lowell of Hastings and Larry of Brooklyn Center; four grandchildren; one great-granddaughter, and a brother, Walter, of Joliet, Ill.

Services are pending.

Trudi Hahn is at thahn@startribune.com.