

Justeson, former mayor, dies

Nels M. Justeson, mayor of Wisconsin Rapids from 1954 to 1968, died at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday at Riverview Hospital following a lingering illness. He was 73.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Moravian Church, the Rev. Rudolph Schulze officiating. Burial will be in Forest Hill Cemetery.

Justeson served 36 consecutive years in elective office in the city. His public office career began in 1932 when he won election to his first term as city clerk. He held that post until 1954. That year he successfully challenged incumbent Mayor Carl Knudsen to win his first two-year term as mayor.

He was elected six more times before deciding to retire in 1968. Justeson had undergone surgery in 1967 for removal of a ruptured disc from his back. Failure to recover completely from that operation prompted his decision not to run for a new term in 1968.

In all, Justeson ran for elective office 19 times, losing only once. That was in 1950 when he won the Democratic nomination for Wisconsin secretary of state. Justeson polled more than 400,000 votes in the statewide general election, but lost to incumbent Fred Zimmerman.

Born August 5, 1905 in the town of Carson, Portage County, Justeson moved to Wisconsin Rapids as a boy. He was a 1925 graduate of Lincoln High School and attended Lawrence College at Appleton. Prior to being elected city clerk he was a car salesman.

He married Mabel Hagen, August 6, 1938 at Ephraim, Wis.



Nels
Justeson

In 1957 Justeson received a community service award from the Wisconsin Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. He was active in the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

For several years he headed the March of Dimes fund-raising drive in the area and was chairman of the Brotherhood Week observance. Justeson a member of the board of directors of the finance and building committee of the Moravian Church.

Survivors include his wife, a son, Gary, Appleton; twin brothers, Just, Port Edwards, and Peter, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada; three sisters, Anna Crotteau, Largo, Fla., Mrs. Roy Hoesman, Bethlehem, Penn., and Marie Justeson, Downey, Calif., and three grandchildren. One son, a brother and two sisters preceded him in death.