

ADAM HEBER WINDER

RCBA President 1930

Many of the past presidents of the Riverside County Bar Association earned their fame from the noteworthy cases which they handled. For example, Earl Redwine (1937) gained renown for his vigorous prosecution of the infamous “Chicken Coop” serial killer Gordon Stewart Northcott. James Ward (1973) was a prominent First Amendment advocate who garnered several important victories for America’s press before the United States Supreme Court.

Then there are other past presidents whose reputation was primarily attained by their involvement in the community and their participation in numerous service organizations. Based upon the many newspaper articles about his career, Adam Heber Winder, who was the RCBA president in 1930, seems to fall into this category.

Born on May 2, 1882 in Miamisburg, Ohio to Perry and Margaret Winder, he attended public schools in that state and later graduated from Cornell University in New York in 1908 with an LL.B. He was admitted to the Ohio bar in that same year. He subsequently moved to California and, in 1910, he obtained his California bar license (#1625).

Despite becoming a member of the bar, Winder chose to focus his early career in the field of education. The Hanford Sentinel reported on September 8, 1910 that he had received his credentials for teaching in Kings County. He taught at Hanford HS for only a year when the Sentinel reported on April 21, 1911 that he was resigning his position as a teacher and moving to Riverside to join the law firm of Purington & Adair. After the passing of W.A. Purington, the firm became Adair & Winder. It should be noted that A.A. Adair was the first president of the RCBA.

Newspaper accounts from that time reported that Winder was handling cases ranging from probate to divorce to water rights. However, the vast majority of his press coverage relates to his participation in numerous organizations rather than his handling of legal matters. As an example, the *Riverside Enterprise* dated May 9, 1912 reported that he had joined the Roosevelt Progressive Club.

He also made the social pages in the press when the Hanford Sentinel reported on July 20, 1912 that he had married Helen Adele Dobbs (born in 1889 in New York) on July 18. The wedding was described in that paper as “the culmination of a romance which begun at Cornell University when they were both students there”. The article further reported that the ceremony took place in Alton, CA (Humboldt County) where the bride’s parents resided. It was also attended by the groom’s parents who were then residing in Redlands, CA. Winder was described as a prominent Riverside attorney who was also the secretary of the Republican organization in the city.

Winder's continued involvement in organizations was noted in the October 16, 1916 edition of the *Riverside Daily Press* which reported that he was the worshipful master of the Riverside Masonic Lodge.

Besides his involvement with the Masons, Winder was a long-time participant with the Riverside Kiwanis Club. According to the Kiwanis website, the Riverside chapter was officially chartered on January 20, 1921 becoming the 387th chapter. Charter ceremonies were held at the Mission Inn on April 23, 1921 for 96 charter members. The *Riverside Daily Press* reported in its January 13, 1921 edition that Winder had become the vice-president of the new Riverside chapter. In a later edition of that paper dated November 22, 1922, it was reported that he had become the chapter's second president.

Winder continued to work his way up the ladder in the Kiwanis and, by March 11, 1923, the Visalia Morning Delta reported that Lt. Governor Winder of the Kiwanis was attending a meeting in Fresno. He was noted as being one of the featured speakers at the meeting and his address was described as "rather long, wonderfully interesting and had a terrific punch to it." By May, 20, 1924, the San Luis Obispo Tribute reported that he was now the Governor of the Kiwanis in California and was in that city to present the SLO chapter with its international charter.

While he was a member of the Kiwanis Club, Winder was involved in what was probably then (and certainly now) a controversial matter. The *Oakland Tribute* reported in its November 15, 1930 edition that Winder, as a Kiwanis member, participated in an anti-communism program in Oakland which was attended by more than 3,000 Kiwanis representing 133 "key cities of the west". He was part of a Kiwanis committee which prepared a proposed resolution to high school boards of education to require that graduates of public schools swear their allegiance to the United States before being issued a diploma from a public school and/or and college.

Besides his involvement with the Kiwanis, he participated in other community related activities. For example, the *Beaumont Daily Gazette* noted on October 4, 1928 that Winder was a part of a group of very prominent Southern Californians who were trying to foster and encourage the formation of a state park to include the San Jacinto Mountains.

He was also a member of the Riverside Chamber of Commerce. In an article dated July 28, 1932, the *Beaumont Daily Gazette* reported that chamber president George Snidecor had appointed Winder and fellow Riverside attorney Chancey McFarland (also an RCBA past president) to its legislative committee. The *Perris Progress* reported that same year that Winder's law office was located in the (now historic) Loring Building.

Winder eventually entered the field of politics as noted in the *Auburn Journal* dated June 23, 1932. It was reported that he was one of several candidates among the Republican party for the

19th Congressional District comprising Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. His political activities for the Republican party were also discussed in the July 1, 1938 edition of the Palos Verdes Peninsula News which reported that Governor Frank Merriam had announced his appointments of county chairmen to fight for his reelection. Winder was appointed as the chairman for Riverside County.

While Winder was engaging in his various activities which were being reported statewide (as noted by all of the different newspapers mentioned in this article), his wife was making her mark in the social pages. For example, the San Bernardino Sun (02/02/1937) reported that "Mrs. A. Heber Winder" was hosting a bridal and tea party at their home on Arroyo Dr. in Riverside for the University Women of Riverside.

The Winders presumably also owned property in the Palm Springs area because the *Palm Springs News* reported on January 1, 1938 that Winder would be contributing to a series of articles about early Palm Springs history. The paper stated that he was well qualified to author the articles since "he has spent several years studying legal problems concerning Palm Springs and is a property owner in this city".

Reverting to his earlier passion for education, it was reported in the *Tulare Advance Register* dated August 23, 1937 that Winder had been elected on that day to succeed Louis P. Crutcher as president of the State Board of Education. On July 8, 1938, the Lindsay Gazette noted that Winder, as president of the board, was attending at quarterly meeting in Tulare County and that those in attendance took a tour of Sequoia National Park. Subsequently, the Oakland Tribune reported on March 8, 1940 that his term as president would be ending at the end of the month.

Within several months after the termination of his office as president, Winder was dead. He passed away on October 19, 1940 at the age of 58. He is buried in Olivewood Memorial Park in Riverside. His wife Helen survived for many more years and died on June 4, 1969. Her headstone lies next to that of her husband.

During their lifetime, they had two children. Their son Willard was born in Riverside on April 8, 1915 and became a member of the California State Bar (#17842) in 1942. He passed away in Riverside on October 21, 1997. Daughter Beatrice Mae was born on February 15, 1914 and died in Laguna Hills on December 14, 2010.

By Bruce E. Todd.