

JOSEPH S. ELFNER

August 31, 1906—September 4, 1957

A BIOGRAPHICAL MINUTE

Joseph Sherburne Elfner died at his home in Madison, Wisconsin. Although he had been seriously ill since May, his death was a shock to his friends and associates, to whom he was an epitome of zestful living and energetic activity.

He was born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Following his grade and high school education he proceeded to the Uni-

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versity of Wisconsin, graduating in 1934 as an honor student. He received his Master's degree from Wisconsin in 1949.

His varied and successful professional career began as Landscape Architect for the National Park Service during the 1930's, first in Glacier National Park, then at Devil's Lake Park, and later in the University of Wisconsin Arboretum. From 1939 to 1941 he was Assistant Superintendent, Department of Public Parks, South Bend, Indiana. Except for three years in the U. S. Army (1942-45), where he rose from Private to First Lieutenant as transportation commander in the European Theater, he served continuously since 1941 on the Landscape Architecture staff of the University of Wisconsin, Horticulture Department, first as Landscape Extension Specialist and later on the teaching staff with the rank of Professor.

He became known throughout the state for his ready help and sound advice to groups and individuals on landscape problems, for his stimulating leadership in the creation and preservation of natural landscapes, and for his exemplification of the highest standards of the profession of landscape architecture.

He was a Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects from 1953, and was vice president of its Chicago Chapter and a past president of the Wisconsin Society of Landscape Architects. He served on the boards of the Wisconsin Friends of Our Natural Landscape and of the Wisconsin Roadside Council. He was also a member of the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association, and was active in forming an institute training program in co-operation with the University.

Joseph Elfner's creative mind, artistic versatility, professional dedication, dynamic personality, and warm hospitality provided him with a rare capacity for perpetuating among his students his own high conception of landscape architecture as an art of the highest level, thus making them living testimonials of the ideals he taught and illustrated.

A public-spirited citizen, a helpful neighbor, and a host in whose home colleague and student, friend and stranger, associated on terms of perfect cordiality and sincerity, Joseph Elfner's passing represents an irreparable loss.

G. W. L.

Published in the January 1958 edition of the journal, *Landscape Architecture*. It was written by George William Longnecker, who was Joseph Sherburne Elfner's boss at the University of Wisconsin.

I found the reference on google books, and a Librarian at the Steenbock Library at UW was kind enough to scan it for us.

Eric Elfner, October 2012