

## GEORGE KERSTEN, NOTED CRIMINAL JUDGE, DIES AT 80

### On the Bench for Many Famous Trials.

Former Judge George Kersten, who for 47 years was a member of the Cook County bench, spending nearly 24 years of this time in the Criminal courts, died yesterday in his home at 1218 N. Dearborn street. He presided at many famous trials during the 24 years he was on the bench.

Judge Kersten became ill last Friday, when he suffered a sudden heart attack. He was hospitalized Saturday and physicians announced yesterday morning that he was dying and that he died at 11:30 a. m. Judge Kersten would have been 81 years old on March 1.

#### First Kidnappers Sentenced.

Lawyers, fellow judges, and court officials paid their respects to Judge Kersten, before his retirement from the bench, in 1928, and asked him to have more knowledge of the habitual criminal and the gangster in the United States. During his service as a Justice of the peace on Chicago's north side, he presided at trials and his subsequent terms on the Circuit court he presided more than 160,000 criminal cases.

It was before Judge Kersten that William Jones and Adina Jones were convicted of kidnapping 23 years ago. There was a record of the first ever obtained for this crime in the United States, the kidnappers being sentenced respectively to 20 and 25 years in the penitentiary.

It was Judge Kersten's court that

the "car barn bandits" were tried in 1920. The bandits had been operating during one of which a policeman was kidnapped and held for a ransom of \$10,000.

The robbers were tried and sentenced to death. Johnnie Black, the kidnapper, was given 25 years, his

wife, was also sentenced to death by Judge Kersten.

#### Long Race for Sheriff.

Judge Kersten was a Democrat. At one time he was a candidate for the office of sheriff. He was defeated in the election.

When he retired from the bench his record disclosed at that time.

Judge Kersten is survived by his widow, Mrs. Minnie Starr Kersten, and a son, John, Mrs. John Kersten, a daughter of Kersten, Mrs. John Kersten.

Funeral services will be held from his home on Saturday at 2 p. m. Burial will be made in St. Clement's church.

#### Retired to Beach.

In 1905 the Judge was elected to the Circuit bench and began his long service in the Criminal courts. In 1928 the judge began a simplification of the criminal code, which was reflected recently in the passage of the new civil procedure code, and the revision of many sections of the criminal code.

In 1925, following a physical breakdown, he gave up his office and had a vacation for more than a year. At the end of the vacation he made arrangements to return to his duties, but because of continued poor health announced his formal retirement.



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