



Railsplitter Obituary



Russell J Mittelstadt

12 January 1931 – 9 February 2006

Russell J. Mittelstadt, age 75, passed away Thursday, February 9, 2006, at Meriter Hospital. He was born January 12, 1931 in Eau Claire, the son of Frederick and Pearl (White) Mittelstadt.

Russ spent his early years on a farm on Vine Street. He graduated from Eau Claire High School in 1948, and from UW-Madison with a B.S. in 1952. Russ received his Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1960.

He served five years on active duty in the U.S. Army, stationed at Camp Gordon, Ga., Presidio, Calif., completed his Airborne training, first in his class, while at Ft. Benning, Ga., Ft. Lewis, Wash., Augsburg, Germany, and Ft. Ord, Calif.

Russ was employed by the Bank of Madison while attending law school. After graduation he worked at Spohn, Ross, Stevens and Pick law firm. Russ was a candidate for Dane County district attorney in 1962 and chairman of Wilbur Renk's senatorial campaign in 1964. He was elected Dane County judge in 1966-1972.

Russ then returned to private practice until retirement in 1998. He then served as a reserve circuit court judge throughout Wisconsin until 2000.

Russ continued his military career for 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserve in the 84th Division in Milwaukee and the Fox River Valley retiring as a full colonel, with a Meritorious Service Medal. He graduated from the U.S. Army War College and Army Command and General Staff School.



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His noteworthy years were as a Dane County judge during the turbulent '60s, when the least popular professions were judge and an officer in the military.

When the Reserve Officers' Association built its National Headquarters at One Constitution Ave., Washington, D.C., Russ served as National Councilman, Vice President Army. He cast the deciding vote for the Minuteman Memorial.

His military duty also called him to serve on active duty in the President's War Room during several crises. He was one of the first officers trained in nuclear Warfare at Sandia A.F.B., New Mexico in 1957.

Russ was a private pilot holding multiple certifications, and enjoyed piloting many trips coast to coast, border to border and to Alaska in the Navion and Bonanza. He was a member and past president of Yahara Lakes Association and received its Member of the Year Award in 1988 for contributions for preserving area lakes and rivers.

For more than 30 years, he cherished his wilderness experiences, canoeing, camping and fishing, in the Boundary Waters and the Quetico. Russ was an avid hunter. He was a former Class A ski jumper.

Russ was district chairman of the Second Congressional District Republican Party in 1984, and a delegate to the National Republican Convention in Dallas, Texas, which renominated President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

He was a member of R.O.A., VFW Post 7591, American Legion and NRA. He was also a member of St. John's Lutheran Church and served on the Church Council.

Russ is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, Marlys of Monona; a daughter, Mary K. Mittelstadt of Bloomington, Ill.; two sons, Marcus J. Mittelstadt of Cottage Grove and Miles S. Mittelstadt of Appleton; two grandsons, Kurt V. Mittelstadt and Kraig V. Mittelstadt of Appleton; two brothers, Frederick (Arlene) and Charles (Angelica); sisters, Betty (Ed) Mathwig, Maxine (Leland) Schultz, Jean (Dennis) Haanpaa.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Robert and Jack Mittelstadt.