Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Knight, William J. Senator Knight, William J.
Represented Dubuque County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 3 Mar 1838 Kilkenny, Ireland

2. Marriage (s) date place

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business Admitted to the bar in 1857 at age 19; held numerous positions of honor and trust in the political and financial world

B. Civic responsibilities

C. Profession Attorney; district attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad for 40 years; legal advisor for the monks of New Melleray Abbey and for Sisters of Charity

4. Church membership Catholic

5. Sessions served 18th General Assembly 1880 - House of Representatives
21st, 22nd General Assemblies 1886, 1888 - Senate

6. Public Offices

A. Local Elected mayor of Dubuque in 1869 and again in 1878; member of Board of Education for several years;

B. State

C. National

7. Death 23 Feb 1908 Dubuque, Iowa

8. Children James E.; Frank H.; Mrs. Emil Kiene; Mary

9. Names of parents

Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

Knight, William Jr.

10. Education Educated by a private tutor

11. Degrees Attended Kilkenny College in Kilkenny, Ireland

12. Other applicable information Democrat

- He crossed America with his parents at age 14 settling at Dubuque, Iowa
- In 1855 he was a student in the law office of Jeffrey M. Griffith where he was a successful student. In 1857 at age 19, he was admitted to the bar.
- He stayed with Mr. Griffith, Sr. attracted by his unusual ability. He stayed as a junior member of the firm until Mr. Griffith, Sr. died in 1882.
- He then began to practice alone

Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

Knight, William Jr

Sources Log For Legislation Entries

Applicability

Source	Non Applicable	Applicable	Information obtained
- Obituary - The Dubuque Times Journal, Dubuque, Iowa, Tues. Feb. 25, 1908, p. 5, col. 1			
- Faith and Fortunes - An Encyclopedia of Dubuque County, Iowa 1998, p. 232			

Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

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W. J. KNIGHT DEAD

PROMINENT ATTORNEY PASSES TO GREAT BEYOND.

End Came Sunday Afternoon At Family Residence On Main Street Dubuque Bar Loses a Brilliant Member.

The death of Attorney W. J. Knight, one of the oldest and most able members of the Dubuque bar, and for many years an important figure in the political and financial history of the city, occurred at the family residence, 1397 Main street, at 1:25 Sunday afternoon. Mr. Knight had been in failing health for the past three months, but his illness did not assume a serious aspect until last Tuesday. Since that time he sank rapidly and Saturday all hopes for his recovery were abandoned, and Sunday afternoon he passed peacefully away surrounded by his children.

W. J. Knight was born in Kilkenny, Ireland, March 3, 1838. He received his early instruction and education under a private tutor and later entered Kilkenny college in his native city. As a mere youth his remarkable aptitude in his studies attracted attention. When fourteen years of age he came to American with his parents and settled in Dubuque.

Lawyer at Nineteen.

In 1855 he became a student in the law office of Jeffry M. Griffith, where he was most successful in his studies, and in 1857, when only nineteen years old, he was admitted to the bar. During the time he was in the office of Mr. Griffith his unusual ability attracted the notice of the elder attorney, who took young Knight into partnership. He continued in the position of junior member of this prominent legal firm until the death of Mr. Griffith in 1882. Since that time Mr. Knight had continued the practice of law alone. He held numerous positions of honor and trust in the political and financial world.

Mayor of Dubuque.

In 1869 he was elected mayor of Dubuque, and again in 1878 he was

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Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa

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Mayor of Dubuque.

In 1869 he was elected mayor of Dubuque, and again in 1878 he was elected to the same office. In 1880 he was elected a member of the legislature and in 1885 elected state senator. He also served as a member of the board of education for several years. For forty years he held the important position of district attorney for the Illinois Central railroad. He was also legal adviser for the monks of New Melleray abbey and for the Sisters of Charity.

Was Remarkable Man.

In many respects W. J. Knight was a remarkable man. His great ability as a lawyer was conceded by all, and his force, fearlessness and learning was admitted by all coming in contact with him. Absolute independence of character was his, and at all times he displayed courage that was unflinching. As a politician and a citizen he was always the same; fearless, aggressive, asking no quarter, but pursuing the tenor of his way regardless of public or private criticism. His mind was unusually active and his perceptions keen, and when he entered into the preparations of a case he never dismissed it from his mind until he had studied and investigated all the law bearing relating to the subject. In his death the Dubuque bar loses one of its most brilliant members.

In religion Mr. Knight was a Catholic, and for many years was a member of St. Patrick's parish. Four children survive him. They are: James E., Frank H., Mrs. Emil Kiene and Miss Mary.

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