

J. U. Sweeney, Civic Leader, Dies Suddenly



JOSEPH U. SWEENEY.

Joseph U. Sweeney, 67, once the youngest county judge in El Paso County's history and later a progressive mayor, died at 4 p. m. Tuesday in his home, 1615 Arizona Street, after he had suffered a heart attack there Monday night.

Since he retired as mayor in 1910, after being elected to two terms, Mr. Sweeney had been in private practice. He was active until shortly before his sudden death.

Mr. Sweeney, at the age of 25, was elected county judge. He was re-elected for three successive terms and resigned in the first month of his third term to become a candidate for mayor.

He was elected mayor in 1906.

Editorialists of the day wrote of him:

"Mayor Sweeney has administered his important and trying office wisely and well, as he has discharged the duties of every office he has ever held. His faithfulness, earnestness, zeal and ability have always been conspicuous."

During Mr. Sweeney's tenure as mayor the viaduct over the railroad tracks at Austin Street and the first storm sewers in the city were built, power lines were transferred from poles to underground conduits, miles of streets were paved, street lights were installed, and new parks created.

Old school teachers will remember his fight for liberal salaries to

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the school system here; and old labor leaders recall his continuous fight for the worker all through his life. Mr. Sweeney has been hailed as the most liberal and progressive mayor in the city's history.

The former mayor's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sweeney of San Antonio, were in the first wagon train that arrived here and settled in the town then known as Franklin. His father was born in Ireland.

Former Mayor Sweeney was born May 6, 1875 in San Antonio. While he was mayor here, on July 12, 1909, he married Miss Eleanor Margaret Humphris, of Marfa, in Santa Monica, Calif.

As mayor, Mr. Sweeney was host to President William Howard Taft and President Porfirio Diaz of Mexico in El Paso. He was President Taft's special emissary to Mexico City to invite President Diaz to the United States. While in the Mexican capital, the mayor and his young bride were guests of President Diaz in Chapultepec Castle.

Mr. Sweeney once recalled the historic visits of the two presidents to El Paso.

"Taft went to Juarez to visit Diaz after Diaz had come from Mexico City to meet him," said Mr. Sweeney. "That was the first time a President had ever left his country to put foot on foreign soil during his term of office."

"The visit of Taft to El Paso was one of the greatest things that ever happened to the city," he said.

Mr. Sweeney is survived by his

brother, Dr. John T. R. Sweeney of Richmond, Va.; a sister, Miss E. J. Sweeney of San Francisco, Calif.; three daughters, Mrs. Eleanor Brindley of Las-Crosse, Wis.; Mrs. William Y. Frenzel of Alexandria, La., and Mrs. F. Arthur Brown of El Paso; a son, Lt. Joseph U. Sweeney, Jr., of Camp Ritchie, Md., and two grandchildren, Donna Jon and Penny Brindley of LaCrosse.

Funeral arrangements were pending with Kaster and Maxon.