

CLINE WILLIAMS

Earl Cline

In 1922, Earl Cline joined Frank Hall and Frank Williams, and the Firm became Hall, Cline & Williams. Earl Cline was a promising young lawyer with a record of achievement outside the practice of law. Cline had earned a statewide reputation as a successful coach, principal, and superintendent at high schools in Sidney, Geneva, and Nebraska City. His legal education was often interrupted by a lack of financial resources. He completed law school at Michigan and had just begun practicing in Nebraska City when the United States declared war on Germany in April of 1917. Cline immediately accepted a commission as an Army infantry officer. In September of 1918 he received a head wound so severe he was left for dead on the battlefield at St. Mihiel. Upon recovering from his wound, Cline returned to the United States, married his high school sweetheart, and began practicing law in Nebraska City, until joining Hall, Cline and Williams.

Cline was a founder and the first commander of the Nebraska American Legion, an extremely powerful social and political organization in the post-World War I era. At Hall, Cline & Williams, Cline rose quickly to the top rank of Nebraska trial lawyers. Cline's primary practice was litigation, while his partner Frank Williams built on the Firm's work for First National Bank of Lincoln and other long time clients, expanding the Firm's business, corporate and banking practice. Cline served on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents from 1925 to 1937. Throughout much of his career, Cline was counsel for the University. In 1963, the University presented Cline with an honorary law degree.

Earl Cline died in 1976. During his fifty four years with the Firm, it grew from three to 21 lawyers and became generally known as "Cline Williams."



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Frank Williams