

# Harvey Karl Mangum

## A Brief Biography

by  
Richard K. Mangum

### Summary:

Born: December 3, 1908

Place: Pima, Arizona.

Parents: James Harvey Mangum & Charlotte Kempe Mangum

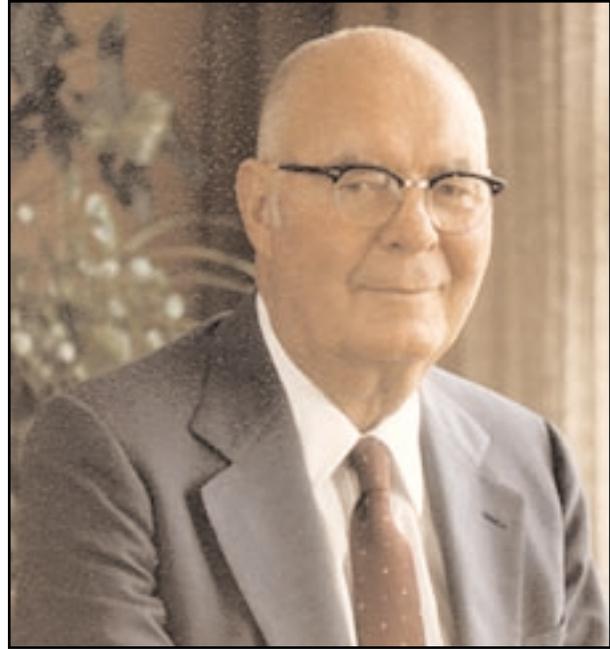
Siblings: Otto, Zona, Lydia, Eugene

Children: Richard K. Mangum and Linda Lee Ropes

Death: January 8, 1993 in Flagstaff

**K**arl Mangum was born in Pima, a small town in southern Arizona, where he attended local schools. His father ran a little store, and then a farm during Karl's childhood. After Karl finished the eighth grade his parents decided to advance themselves by getting an education, so they loaded up their five children and moved to Tempe where the senior Mangums attended Tempe Normal School (now Arizona State University) and got teaching degrees after two years of study. The boys worked to help put their parents through college, milking cows early in the morning and late in the evening at a Tempe dairy.

After becoming certified teachers, the Mangums returned to the Gila Valley and landed jobs at Thatcher. The town was the home of the Gila Academy (now Eastern Arizona Junior College) and offered the final two years of high school and first two years of college. Karl enrolled at Gila. Although the school was small, it had an active athletic program, and Karl was a star at basketball and football, playing on the college varsity while still technically a high school student. He was offered a football scholarship at the University of Southern California, and intended to accept it. The summer he graduated, while waiting to go to USC, he worked at a copper mine at Miami, and while there had a visit from legendary University of Arizona coach, J. F. "Pop" McKale. Shrewdly, McKale prevailed upon Karl's loyalty to Arizona and persuaded him to stay in his native state and play football for U of A, even though he could offer him nothing more than a tuition waiver and a job. He asked Karl



what his career ambitions were and Karl replied that he thought he might become a teacher and coach. McKale prevailed upon him to become a lawyer instead. Later Karl learned that McKale had done this because law was one of the few three-year programs available at the school.

Karl played varsity football for the Wildcats for all three years of his law school career and made all-conference at tackle, in the days when team members played both offense and defense. He was so good that he was named to several Dream Teams in later years, and had conditions then been what they are now, would probably have gone on to play professional football.

Karl graduated with distinction from law school and was chosen outstanding law graduate in 1931. He took the bar exam, finishing fourth out of seventy-two applicants, and was sworn in on September 19. This was during the Great Depression and job opportunities were pitifully few. Finally, he heard that a lawyer in Flagstaff was moving to California and might be willing to turn his practice over to someone.

Eager for any opportunity, Karl decided to try Flagstaff though he had never been there. He gathered his belongings in a small suitcase and—

because he had no money—hitchhiked to Williams. There he bought a train ticket to Flagstaff so that he could arrive in style. Once in Flagstaff, he contacted the departing attorney, who did turn over his practice to him, and settled in. This was in September 1931.

There were only six lawyers in Flagstaff at the time, counting the County Attorney and Judge. Even so, there was scarcely enough business to go around.

His first office was upstairs in the Babbitt Building, next to a dentist, known for his rough technique and disinclination to use pain-killers. Screams of his patients tended to be unnerving to Karl's clients. Karl paid forty dollars a month for his office, and lived in the back, where he installed a cot, concealing his living quarters with a curtain.

Even at forty dollars a month, business was so slow that he fell behind in his rent, and the Babbitts were kind enough to carry him, having pity on the fledgling. In gratitude, he refused ever to take a case against the Babbitts.



1935  
*Dashing  
Young  
County  
Attorney*

At one point, his financial straits were so dire that he decided he would have to quit unless he found

some way to pay his rent by the end of the month. On the 30th, just as he was at the point of closing down his practice, he was walking out of his office and starting down the stairs when a man came up the stairs, peering at the doorways. The man was looking for an attorney, and the five dollar fee that Karl made from the encounter kept him going. The winter was extremely difficult and by spring Karl was barely surviving.

1932 was an election year, and in the spring the lawyer whose practice Karl had taken over returned for a visit. He convinced Karl to run for County Attorney, and gave him fifteen dollars to place an announcement in the newspaper. Having no money for advertising, Karl felt that the only way to win was to contact the voters personally, so he went door-to-door, begging rides with other candidates to places like Williams and Fredonia. Of this experience, he said, "I learned what it means for Coconino County to be the second largest in the United States." There were two Democrat candidates for the post, with no Republican challenger, so the issue was decided in the primary, where Karl won by 79 votes in September 1932. Early in January 1933 he and eight other lawyers organized the Coconino County Bar Association. A week later, he was sworn in to his first public office.

Once established as County Attorney, he worked very hard and soon established a fine reputation, winning additional friends and the respect of his peers. The salary was a comfortable one, \$2500 per year, and he was able to pay off his debts and get a regular apartment. He was also emboldened to take up a courtship with Jessie Mae Lee of Thatcher. He had known her in his grade school days, but had lost touch until he walked by Carson Studio in Flagstaff one day not long after he arrived here and saw her photograph in the window. It was the picture taken for *La Cuesta*, the local college yearbook, as she had come to Flagstaff to get a teaching degree. He renewed her acquaintance, began the courtship, which he continued after she graduated and moved back to Thatcher, and they were married on June 25, 1934.

On October 29, 1936, their first child, Richard Karl Mangum, was born.

In 1938, several citizens approached Karl and urged him to run for Judge, as they believed that the incumbent was doing a poor job. The Arizona Constitution required that a person be thirty years old in order to be a judge of the superior court. Karl, who was born in December 1908, would not be thirty until after the November election, which posed a legal problem. He sought an Attorney General's opinion and got a favorable ruling, which was that the time of taking office was the controlling date and that since he would be thirty by then, he could run. He was elected by a narrow margin and when he took the oath of office in January 1939, he became the youngest judge ever to serve in Arizona, a record he held for many years.

Again, as he had done as County Attorney, Karl distinguished himself as a judge. The local caseload was very light, so he did quite a bit of traveling, making friends and establishing his reputation around the state. The salary of \$400 per month gave him a comfortable living.

Karl handily won re-election to the judgeship every two years afterwards and seemed well on the road to being judge for life. Then World War Two came along. Due to his age, occupation, and family status (his second—and final—child, Linda Lee, was born July 13, 1942), he was draft-exempt, but felt that he must do his patriotic duty. He volunteered for the Navy in 1944, resigning the judgeship. After training at the Great Lakes Naval Training base, he was sent to Saipan, as a Lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General's office. He returned to Flagstaff in 1946, and instead of seeking the bench again, decided to go into private practice.

He had not advertised, and was not even sure that people knew he was back in town, but the next morning after his arrival, he had a profitable criminal defense case on his doorstep. His new career had begun. Things were much different than they had been in 1931. These were boom times and he was well-known as an honest, intelligent and hard-working attorney. Before long his practice had expanded so much that late in 1946 he brought in a partner, Ted Flick, and the firm of Mangum and Flick was born.



1945

*Karl  
&  
Richard*

In 1952, believing that the incumbent County Attorney was not doing a proper job, Karl ran for public office again and was again elected. He was voted into another term in 1954 but resigned in 1955 to turn the office over to Laurance T. Wren, his deputy.

In 1955 the firm of Mangum and Flick was dissolved, and Karl entered into a partnership with Neil Christensen. In 1957 Douglas J. Wall joined the firm. The firm was augmented in 1961 by Richard K. Mangum. Neil Christensen died in 1966 and Daniel Stoops came into the firm to replace him. When Richard K. Mangum became a judge of the superior court in 1976, Bob Warden moved into the partnership, which then became Mangum, Wall, Stoops & Warden, the name it still holds.

Neil Christensen was the City Attorney at the time of his death, and Karl held his last public office by serving out the balance of Christensen's term.

A civic-minded man, Karl did not confine his achievements to the arena of the law. He was a 32nd Degree Mason and Shriner, Exalted Ruler of the Flagstaff Elks Lodge, President of Kiwanis, Head of the 20-30 Club, and Noble Grand of the Odd Fellows, as well as being active in the Boy Scouts.



1947

*The Family. Author's bubble-blowing spoils portrait*

Over the sixty-one years of his law practice, Karl Mangum rose to prominence as one of the most distinguished attorneys in Arizona, being recognized for his excellence in many ways. To mention some of his honors: He was elected President of the State Bar of Arizona in 1967. In 1982 he was given the University of Arizona Alumni Association's Distinguished Citizen Award. In 1985 he became a Founding Fellow of the Arizona Bar Foundation. In 1989 he was awarded the Walter E. Craig Distinguished Service Award. He was a Fellow of the International Society of Barristers and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

This record gives an indication of his success as a lawyer but does not really tell the story of how he conducted himself as an attorney. For a testimonial to his conduct, the author can speak from personal experience, as his son and law partner for fifteen years.

Karl Mangum, as might be expected of a man who had excelled in major college football, was very physical and had a fierce desire to win. However, he did what outstanding lawyers must do, he tempered his ambition with dignity and self-control. He was always scrupled and ethical and did not believe that it was right to win at any cost. Many a time I saw him draw the line at questionable conduct. He won his cases by out-thinking and outworking his opponents. He was extremely effective with juries, who sensed his integrity and passion.



1957

*Neil Christensen, Karl, Doug Wall—Partners*

He became a lawyer at a time when lawyers were rare and were considered to be special. He had worked hard to win the honor of becoming an attorney and was proud to be a member of the bar, and was always working to preserve and improve it. Since there were only a handful of lawyers in Flagstaff when he came here, he soon knew all of them intimately and worked with them every day. This bred a feeling of collegiality that lasted as long as he lived. While competition was spirited among these few, it was never mean-spirited.

Hard work, fair play, and native ability. These few words might sum up the essence of the man.

Upon Karl's death, Court of Appeals Judge William F. Garbarino said it well, "He was a lawyer's lawyer."

I know that he would be proud to have the Flagstaff Inn of Court named in his honor.