

Ivan Michaelson Czap, Esq.

Ivan Michaelson Czap, long-time member of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America and prominent attorney, died February 10 at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia. He was 59.

Born in Boston, May 10th, 1913, where his father, the late V. Rev. Michael Czap was a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church, Mr. Czap was graduated from Penn State, the youngest member of his class, and later from the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania. In 1937, the year he began the practice of law in Philadelphia, he was elected to the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America. He was the youngest member ever to hold such a position and he was re-elected each term until his death.

As a young lawyer, he was a member of the Prison Society (for prison reforms) and for many years was a Voluntary Defender (a lawyer who takes cases of those too poor to afford an attorney). Later he was a member of the Immigration and Naturalization Society which helped those in difficulties who sought admission to this country and to its citizenship. He was president of the local chapter for three years.

He had offices in the Morris Building at 1421 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, and when persons who could not speak English came into the lobby and looked confused, they were taken in hand by the elevator girls and sent to his office where they found the man they had been looking for.

Recognizing the importance of having a school of higher learning for training of the clergy for the Orthodox priesthood, he was one of the initiating group for the establishment of St. Vladimir's Seminary and drew up the first legal papers for it. Until he died, he was a trustee of St. Vladimir's. He frequently lectured there and at St. Tikhon's Seminary on Church-related legal problems. Recently, he established the Father Michael Czap Memorial Library at St. Vladimir's and contributed funds and many books to it.

The late Metropolitan Theophilus appointed him Archivist of Official Records in Alaska where the Orthodox built their first churches on this continent. He later was instrumental in establishing an orphanage for Aleuts under the aegis of the Church.

He was a member of the Society of SS. Sergius and Albans and president of the Niconian Society. He did research on church matters, Byzantine art and architecture all his life in French, Serbian and Russian.

In 1953 he went to Mt. Athos, where he assisted the monks in legal matters and channeled funds there through the Friends of Mt. Athos which he founded. He lectured widely on both Athos and Byzantine Art on behalf of Athos.

At Evanston, Ill., in 1954, he was a delegate from the Church to the World Council of Churches and was also a delegate to the meetings in India in 1961, and Sweden in 1968.

He wrote many articles on icons and conditions of the Church in communist countries. Churches other than his own bestowed honors on him and the Russian Orthodox Church in America gave him a Gramota for outstanding service. He was honored with an award from the Albanian Orthodox Church and a plaque from the Antiochian Orthodox Church. He was a member of the Icon Society of Paris and president of the Icon Society of America. For many years he attended church conferences both



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here and abroad and was instrumental in bringing monks from Yugoslavia where they had been persecuted by the communists. He helped bring pressure at Athos to admit monks other than those of Greek origin.

For years he edited the publication of "Ye Colonial Crier" for which he gathered and wrote most of the material. From 1943 to 1945 he edited the Russian Orthodox Journal for which he wrote, with his wife, Eva, many of the articles and biographies under various pseudonyms. He later became chairman of the board of editors. For two terms he was Lt. Governor of the Colonial District.

After years of successful private practice, at the age of 52 he accepted an invitation by the District Attorney's office to be special trial counsel and was known for his tremendous workload and achievements as a prosecutor. He always had time to explain procedures and points of law to the younger assistant D.A.'s who were impressed and helped by his vast knowledge of the law, his incisive mind and gentle manner.

The name Ivan in Church usage is interchangeable with John and his patron saint was St. John Chrysostom whose musical voice rang out with such sweetness and clarity during the divine liturgies at Sancta Sophia in Constantinople that he has been known since then as St. John the Golden-mouth. The name may have been prophetic, for anyone passing a court room could tell at once the name of the counsel pleading or prosecuting a case by the distinguished voice and diction of Ivan Michaelson Czap. He also gave a course in divorce proceedings at special seminars for lawyers.

Each Christmas he sang in the Lawyer's Chorus and made use of the training he had received in his youth when he took any part at all in the church choirs. In those days choirs always sang in Old Slavonic. It was because of his familiarity with Church Slavonic and his knowledge of Russian that he had ready access to other Slavonic languages which he spoke passably well with his foreign clients.

Surviving him are his wife, Eva, his mother Matushka Mary, a sister, Mrs. Julia Kozup, and a brother, Peter.

The body laid in state in the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Philadelphia, where a panikhida was served on Tuesday evening, February 13. Officiating at the panikhida were the Very Rev. Alexander Fedoronko, Rev. Roman Serdinsky and the Rev. Paul Borick, pastor at St. Nicholas.

The divine liturgy for the departed was celebrated on Wednesday morning by the Rt. Rev. Alexander Schmemann, dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary, with the choir of St. Vladimir's Seminary singing the responses under the direction of their musical director, Prof. David Drillock.

IN MEMORIAM

The Orthodox Church in America suffered the loss of two dedicated churchmen within two days of each other, one in the prime of life, the other spanning several generations. Dr. V. M. Bensin and Ivan Michaelson Czap, Esq., were devoted laborers in the Church's vineyard and its related organizations. May their memory live on to inspire others to continue the work of the Orthodox Church in America. Memory Eternal!

After the liturgy, the funeral service was celebrated by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Ireney, assisted by the Rt. Rev. Alexander Schmemann, the Rt. Rev. Basil Horsky of Philadelphia; V. Rev. Alexander Fedoronko of Philadelphia; V. Rev. Paul Shafran of Trenton, N. J.; V. Rev. Daniel Hubiak of New York; Rev. Daniel Ressetar of Harrisburg, Pa., and Protodeacon Nicholas Kuzmin-Poliansky of New York.

Interment was at St. Tikhon's Monastery cemetery, where final commitment to the earth was conducted by His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian, Rector of the monastery, His Grace, Bishop Herman, and the V. Rev. Vladimir Borichevsky, with the seminarians of St. Tikhon's Seminary singing the responses.

Ivan will be greatly missed by his numerous friends and associates, while the Orthodox Church in America has lost one of its foremost churchmen.

May his memory be eternal!