

Dakota Images

Born in Arendal, Norway, on 22 January 1904, Sigurd Anderson moved with his family to a farm near Canton, South Dakota, when he was three. Although he could not speak English when he started school, he graduated from Canton Lutheran Normal in 1925. Anderson taught at a country school near Bancroft before enrolling at the University of South Dakota, where he earned a law degree in 1937. That same year, he married Vivian Walz. The couple had one daughter.

Anderson established a law firm in Webster and won election on the Republican ticket as state's attorney for Day County in 1938 and 1940 before being appointed assistant attorney general for South Dakota in 1941. With the advent of World War II, he joined the United States Naval Reserve and served at numerous posts in the United States and the South Pacific, reaching the rank of lieutenant commander. Following the war, he was elected attorney general for South Dakota and served from 1947 to 1951.

Anderson defeated his Democratic challenger, future Miami Dolphins owner Joe Robbie, in the gubernatorial election of 1950 and won reelection in 1952. During his administration, the state finally paid off the debt from the rural credit program, instituted in 1917 to provide low-interest loans to farmers. Anderson valued education, and he secured funding increases for South Dakota schools as well as an amendment to the state constitution allowing increased bonding limits for school districts. In the realm of state government, he oversaw salary increases for state employees and the creation of the Legislative Research Council to provide administrative support to state lawmakers. Anderson was also a promoter of Missouri River development, serving as chair of the Missouri River States Committee and guiding the state through the devastating Missouri River flood of 1952.

After leaving office, Anderson was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Federal Trade Commission, a post he held from 1955 to 1965. Anderson later served as judge for South Dakota's fifth judicial circuit. He ran for governor again in 1964 but lost in the primary.

Sigurd Anderson died on 21 December 1990 in Webster and is buried in the town's cemetery.

—Dan Brosz



Sigurd Anderson

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On the covers: For the past seventy-five years, the colorful murals of Lakota artist Felix Walking have decorated the gymnasium at Saint Paul's Catholic mission in Marty, South Dakota. In this issue, Elizabeth J. Almlie explores Walking's paintings and the stories they tell of the mission and the people associated with it.

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