

Ragnvald Anderson Nestos Tree Recipient 1991

13th [Governor of North Dakota](#)



In office
1921–1925

Born April 12, 1877
[Voss, Norway](#)

Died July 15, 1942

Political party [Republican](#)

Religion [Evangelical Lutheran](#)

Ragnvold Anderson Nestos was a native of Voss, Norway. He was the son of Andres R. Nestos and Herborg (Saue) Nestos. One of ten children, he was sixteen and spoke no English when he came to the United States to live with his aunt and uncle at Buxton, North Dakota. He entered the first grade at Buxton and attended school in between working odd jobs and working at lumber camps out of state. Four years later, in 1884, he passed the teachers' examinations and taught in a country school. He completed studies at Mayville Normal School (teachers' college) while homesteading in Pierce County. In 1904 he graduated from the University of North Dakota and moved to Minot, where he began practicing law with attorney C. A. Johnson. ^[1]

When Thor Lodge #67 Sons of Norway was chartered in 1907, Ragnvold Nestos was called on to be its first president.

Political career

Nestos was a member of the Independent Voters Association, running on the Republican ticket. He was a member of North Dakota State House of Representatives, 1911-12; Ward County State's Attorney, 1913-16; and primary candidate for U.S. Senator from North Dakota, 1916. He gained office when Governor Lynn Frazier was defeated in the first successful attempt to recall a governor in U.S. history. Frazier's term was plagued with scandal and a grassroots movement had begun to press for his recall. The *recall election* that removed Governor Lynn Frazier had also removed two other members of the Industrial Commission from office. It was a time of bitter political discontent and bickering between the NPL (Nonpartisan League, which supported state-owned industry) and the IVA (Independent Voters Association, which opposed state ownership of Industries).

Nestos worked hard to make the new state-owned businesses (State Mill and Elevator and the Bank of North Dakota) a success. He also campaigned against illiteracy. During his administration, North Dakota came into national compliance for registering births and deaths, and North Dakota had a full-time health officer for the first time. He ran for and completed a second term of office.^[2]

Nestos never married. He received national recognition for his work on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America. He was a Silver Buffalo Award Winner (1942).^[3] He was also active within the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

In honor of his work with Sons of Norway, as a memorial to former Governor Ragnvold A Nestos, a tree was planted in his memory in the Sverdrup Sons of Norway Park.