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Notre Dame's Legal Renaissance

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LAW SCHOOL NEWS.

NOTRE DAME'S LEGAL RE- NAISSANCE

(By Delmar J. Edmundson)

It's an ill wind, as the philosophers say so aptly and frequently, that blows nobody good. Several years ago, when an intermittent fire gnawed persistently at the old Chemistry Hall till nothing but the walls remained, it would have taken a keen and optimistic eye to discern a silver lining in that catastrophe. But what at first blush seemed a tomb stone happily proved a stepping stone to better things. A new Chemistry Hall, proof against flame, was erected back of the charred shell of the old, and lo! from that shell emerged the new improved Law College.

In the embryo days of that department the learned but handicapped professors held forth always within the cramped space of one room; legal maxims, thundered into attentive ears, echoed from one wall to another, walls that must have grown weary of the rule in Shelley's Case. Those long, sturdy benches, through generation after generation of law students were victims of the sculptural aspirations of men who had little talent but much energy and sharp knives. Thus if they found Blackstone not to their taste, circumstances were not lacking to encourage an emulation of Praxiteles.

That same room knew many able men, professors who strongly builded the foundations, and students who reared the structure to do Alma Mater proud in forensic circles. Under the circumstances the wonder is that so much was accomplished. Timothy E. Howard, Lucius Hubbard, Colonel

Hoynes—these are the founders, names to be forever honored at Notre Dame, men who, under unpropitious conditions, steered the unwieldy bark to recognition and honor. Though the visible manifestations of their work passed with the old law room their memory remains dear to thousands of alumni in the legal profession.

Erected on the site of the first Chemistry Hall, the new building wherein was established the Hoynes College of Law, stands as a symbol of the new regime. Improvements are manifold; facilities for assimilating jurisprudence notably increased—a change which works to the consternation of the “snap course” man, who no longer finds a law degree the easiest, but rather one of the hardest to acquire.

The law library constantly grows in size and catholicity. The law faculty is to be increased to a number more readily able to handle the overflow of incipient barristers. The law building contains a fully equipped court room, behind whose bench a Marshall might be honored to sit. Courses in procedural law and court schedule have been inaugurated by the new dean, Judge Vurpillat, which are unique and exceptional in the law schools of the country. These and countless other changes, of which it would be useless to attempt an enumeration, have been made. The scribe may recount the various forward steps that have been taken, but it were almost impossible to describe the new spirit that pervades the department, a spirit of proud contentment and achievement that is, it may be said, an inevitable accompaniment

of the advance in legal paraphernalia and environment. But these changes are not the only ones to be recorded. Those in the personnel of the faculty are of as great an importance.

Judge Francis J. Vurpillat, proclaimed Dean of the College of Law at the beginning of the school year, is a man whose wide experience and scholarly mind eminently fit him for the position. During his long and brilliant career he served in various official capacities, notably as prosecuting attorney of the 44th Judicial Circuit of Indiana for three consecutive terms, and for several years as County Attorney and as City Attorney at Winamac, his native city. In November, 1908, he was elected Judge of the 44th Judicial Circuit and served in that incumbency for six years. In addition to the fame attained in virtue of the fact that he was the youngest circuit judge ever elected in Indiana, Judge Vurpillat gained prominence and favorable comment from the bench and the bar on account of written opinions delivered in cases of unusual importance tried by him, among which were the Kankakee Meander Land case; another case involving the construction and constitutionality of the Fee and Salary Law; and another placing the first construction on the general liquor laws of the state, particularly the local option law and the Proctor Regulation Act, a construction affirmed by the State Supreme Court. Judge Vurpillat was called

to the Law College in 1915 by the Rev. John Cavanaugh, the then president, and since that time has devoted his talents and energies exclusively to the work of acting dean. The leadership of Judge Vurpillat augurs well for the Law College, and much may be expected from his administration.

Colonel William Hoynes is honored as Dean Emeritus of the Law College. For his past services none can fail to pay him admiring reverence; the University is rich indeed in the benison of his genial personality and profound erudition. Next year Colonel Hoynes will give active service as a special lecturer in Legal Ethics and International Law, of which he is a recognized authority.

Assistant Professor James P. Costello, who recently joined the law faculty, received his degree from the Dickinson School of Law in 1898, after fifteen years experience as a teacher in the public schools of Pennsylvania. During the past twenty-two years he has been in active practice at Hazelton, Pennsylvania.

The Law College will continue to boast the invaluable services of Professor John Tiernan, whose astounding display of mnemonics in citing cases is at once the marvel and the despair of students, and of Judge G. A. Farabaugh, who, besides lecturing at Notre Dame, continues to serve as one of the most prominent attorneys before the bar of South Bend.