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Colonel William J. Hoynes

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COLONEL WILLIAM J. HOYNES

IN the fall of the year 1883, the following paragraph appeared in the *Chicago Evening Journal*: "Mr. William Hoynes, one of the very ablest men of the Chicago bar, has just accepted the professor's chair in the law department of Notre Dame University. The University authorities are to be congratulated on their selection. Mr. Hoynes, as a speaker, writer, thinker and lawyer, has no superior of his own age in the Northwest." Now, after fifty years of devoted service to the law school which once bore his name, Colonel William J. Hoynes is dead. The present generation of students of the University of Notre Dame who knew him only as Dean Emeritus joins with those who know him as teacher, soldier, counsellor, and friend to mourn his passing.

The life-story of Colonel Hoynes stands as both a challenge and an inspiration to any law student. It is a challenge in that the goal it sets is a lofty one; an inspiration because it points out how that goal can be attained.

The dominant theme of that life was service. To say that he lived not for himself but for others is to epitomize his ideals. No trace of selfishness ever marred the glory of his work. He devoted all his talents to God, to country, and to society.

Colonel Hoynes was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1846. He came to America in his early childhood. Though he was only fifteen years old at the time the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in the 20th Volunteer Infantry of the Union army. He participated in most of the important battles of the war. He was severely wounded on one occasion and was discharged, but he soon re-enlisted. At the close of the war he was mustered out as a commissioned officer.

After making preparatory studies at Notre Dame, Colonel Hoynes attended the University of Michigan, where he received his LL. B. in 1877. Notre Dame awarded him an A. M. in 1878, and an LL. D. in 1888. He edited newspapers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Peoria, Illinois. He was admitted to the bar in both Michigan and Illinois, and practiced law in the city of Chicago until he was called to Notre Dame in 1883.

The history of his days at Notre Dame is in many respects the history of the Notre Dame law school. Soon after his appointment to the faculty he became Dean of the College of Law, a position which he held until his retirement in 1918. At the beginning of Colonel Hoynes' incumbency as Dean it could almost be said that he was *the* law school. But nurtured by his interest and scholarship the enrollment and facilities of the school grew rapidly. In an early number of the *Intercollegiate Law Journal* an account of the College of Law when Kent's Commentaries and Blackstone were standard texts, pays tribute to his genius and industry. At one point the writer says of Colonel Hoynes: "His work at Notre Dame is extraordinary—probably without parallel anywhere." Similar tributes have often been paid by all who knew him during his active days. In 1919, he culminated his work with the dedication of the Hoynes College of Law building, which was used by the College of Law until 1931.

Colonel Hoynes was equally active in state and church affairs. He served the state of Indiana on several commissions, and the United States government as a special commissioner on Indian Affairs. Ever a brilliant defender of the Catholic Church, he was rewarded for his work in 1912, when he was made a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Pius X.

Colonel William J. Hoynes is dead; but he has become a part of our heritage. We have profited because he lived.

Thomas L. McKeitt.

Notre Dame, Indiana.