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Dedicatory Address

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am certain that all of us connected with the work of the College rededicate our professional lives to the principles for which the College stands. The people of the state, and the Board of Trustees have expressed great confidence in us. To them we express our determination to justify that confidence.

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

JOHN C. PICKETT

I accepted as an honor the invitation to participate in the dedication of this splendid Law School Building. Its construction is fully justified from the progress which the school has made since its origin. I came to Wyoming at about the time the law school was founded and have had an opportunity to observe its growth, and I am proud of the well deserved reputation it has earned within and without the state. I have come to know personally a very large number of its graduates, and for many years I did business with them as a practitioner and more recently have had the opportunity to observe them from the bench in the federal courts. I can say without equivocation that they meet the standards of practicing lawyers as well as the graduates of any of the law schools in the country. Their basic understanding of the law and the administration of justice is excellent and their ethical standards are high. We find them today rapidly assuming the leadership in the bar and the judiciary of our state and gaining prominence elsewhere. All of this illustrates that the school gives to its students a proper foundation for their entry into the practice of their chosen profession.

This has been accomplished under what most schools would consider adverse conditions. The facilities for teaching were of the makeshift variety but it may well be that in the end this arrangement was actually beneficial to the students. The school was small and of necessity those attending were closely associated together and with the faculty. I have no doubt but that the discussions and interest which developed under such an arrangement were extremely helpful. There are those who believe that reading and attending legal lectures is not enough, but that in addition there should be actual discussions of the subjects taught in groups small enough that all may take part. Many of the more prominent law schools throughout the country now believe that they will obtain better results by offering subjects to smaller classes and more opportunity for individualized training for their students. It is prophesied by leading legal educators that the system of teaching large classes and the mass production of lawyers is on the way out.

With this fine new structure, Wyoming Law School enters into a new era. If, as we have been led to believe, facilities have a decided influence

for the good in higher education, from now on we may look to our own graduates for our share of the modern Websters', Marshalls', Holmes', Davis', Hughes' and others. But even with the most modern facilities, all of those experienced in the legal profession realize the difficulty which confronts a law school in attempting to meet the necessary standards of instruction and to accomplish the desired results. When we view the complexity of modern society and with it the ambit of its laws, we cannot refrain from wondering just what a law school can do within the prescribed time to qualify a young man or woman for the hurly-burly of the general legal practice. Instructors of necessity are more or less specialists in their given subjects, but it seems to me that they can do little more than scratch the surface in preparing a student for the application of legal principles to actual facts. Unfortunate as it may be, the ability to properly analyze facts and apply known legal principles seldom comes from anything but experience. The acquiring of this experience often causes considerable discomfort to a client and embarrassment to a willing and energetic young lawyer. I think, however, that such unfortunate incidents are at a minimum. The lawyer, young or old, usually recognizes his limitations and does not hesitate to seek help from his more experienced brethren, even at a loss of much needed revenue.

Law schools have often been criticized for failure to provide more practical education for the neophyte and it is a serious problem as the average graduate knows little of the practical side of law business. This cannot be solved by turning law schools into fulltime clinics. If such clinics would solve the problem, then our old-time discarded method of learning the law business by work and service in law offices would be the answer. We have learned, however, that law schools having in mind the entire future of its graduates, must be careful to keep first things first. Important as it is that students be given as much practical training as is possible, schools must still remember that they are not training lawyers primarily for the first month or year out of school, but are laying the foundation for a professional career that lasts a lifetime. They must remember that they are not only training legal practitioners, but are training leaders who will be influential in fixing the rules and setting the standards by which people will live in the communities where they are to reside, and who will, to a large extent, determine the policies and laws by which we are to be governed, both locally and nationally. They must not forget that they are training the men and women who will assist materially in determining our international policies and actions in this ever-changing and uncertain world. The school knows, and the lawyer soon learns, that there is nothing static in the law. It is constantly and rapidly changing. The work of each generation of lawyers has in it many elements which were virtually unknown to the preceding generation. This is particularly true today due to the importance of tax and labor matters and the ever increasing development of administrative law and procedure. There is no

reason to believe that such changes will not continue into the future. Law schools must continue their well-established propensity for change and development in the subject matter of the law.

We then may ask ourselves, what can or should a law school do that it is not doing, to better equip its students for more effective service? It can, and does, teach the basic principles of both the substantive and adjective law. It provides at least an inkling of the principal aspects of the law business. It can and should instill in the prospective practitioner his obligation to society and the importance of the lawyer to the preservation of a democratic government and the importance of the proper administration of justice to the continuance of such government. It is in the latter field that I think the law schools have a great opportunity.

A practicing attorney is primarily an advocate. He owes a duty to be loyal to his client and to present his case or his problem in the light most favorable to him, and to advise him honestly as to his conduct and action from which he will derive the greatest benefit. He owes no further duty. He is bound to demand procedural methods to insure the expeditious and inexpensive administration of justice in all courts. He also owes society a duty to do his part to see that right shall prevail over wrong. These are idealistic general words and may suggest a failure to face realities. It has, however, been my observation that the lawyer who conducts his practice according to such principles usually enjoys a desirable practice, good health, a clear conscience, the respect of his neighbors, and ends up with his full share of the worldly goods.

Long ago noted educator said:

“But law is not merely concerned with the past and present. As the science or right, it is progressive, always open to betterment, always testing its results in the scales of justice, always looking forward to a juster world which is to come through its improvement and growth. It has a place for the enthusiasm of the reformer and the prophet; for its constant effort, as we have seen, it is not only, by investigation, to discover the truth, but by prophetic persuasion to bring it to pass. It is at once historian, economist, philosopher, scientist and seer.”

Just fifty years ago, Theodore Roosevelt, at the dedication of the new Law School Building at the University of Chicago, speaking on the responsibility of the law school and the lawyer, had this to say:

“You need honesty, you need courage, and you need common sense. Above all you need it in building the corner-stone of which we laid today, the law school out of which are to come the men who at the bar and on the bench make and construe, and in construing make, the laws of this country; the men who must teach by their actions to all our people that this is in fact essentially a government of orderly liberty under the law.”

The teachings of these remarks are even more applicable today than when spoken.

The principle of justice and liberty under law is each day being crowded into closer quarters and surrounded by the enemies of freedom. There are those among us who believe that our system of governing is outmoded. Within our time we have engaged in three wars that involved a heavy loss of men and material resources to make certain that our way of life shall be preserved. We can no longer take for granted that the blessings in this land which recognizes equal opportunity for all, will continue without effort on the part of all of us. Lawyers, more than anyone else, are by training better qualified and in a better position to extoll the virtues of a form of government which recognizes the dignity of the human being. They can do more than any other class of people to keep alive the spirit of liberty in our own country and in the world. We have, of course, our constitution, our laws and our courts for this purpose. These could prove to be false hopes, for a Learned Hand recently said to a group of new citizens:

"Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it. And what is this liberty which must lie in the hearts of men and women? It is not the ruthless, the unbridled will, it is not freedom to do as one likes. That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow. A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few; as we have learned to our sorrow." This spirit we must keep alive in our people.

So, I say, that the law schools must train the student to give competent service to his client; but more important than the development of trade skill is the development of a wholesome professional attitude so that his skill will be used to further, not thwart, the welfare of the community. Above all, he must understand the responsibility of the lawyer in the maintenance of proper government and the faith and reliance which the people as a whole place upon those trained in the law in governmental matters. If the student while in law school is not indoctrinated with this viewpoint, his ultimate objectives may be dangerously at variance. It is to these purposes that this splendid school could well be dedicated. The State, the University, and President Humphreys are to be congratulated. Dean Hamilton, who has given so many years of his life to the development of this school, is no doubt justly proud on this occasion.