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Address of the President

Charles M. Crowell

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**ANNUAL MEETING OF WYOMING STATE BAR
CASPER, SEPTEMBER 8, 1960**

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

CHARLES M. CROWELL

To the Members of the Wyoming State Bar:

Your President would prefer to follow the precedent established by his distinguished predecessor and deliver this address not orally, but in printed form for incorporation in the minutes and perusal by the critically inclined. Rule 10 of the Rules governing the Bar, however, permits no such consideration for the will of the majority; it specifically provides that the Bar meet annually "to hear the address of the President." Your only immediate recourse, then, is a hasty retreat through the exits here so conveniently provided and marked seemingly for such an emergency.

I welcome, however, this opportunity to report to you on the activities of your officers, commissioners and committee men and women. We have completed a year of effort in your behalf, the results of which will become apparent from the subsequent proceedings of this meeting. I trust those results will merit your approval. To each of my fellow-workers, I extend my most sincere appreciation. I know each member of the Bar joins me in that pat on the back.

The Wyoming State Bar went on the air for the first time this year under the able direction of the Public Relations Committee, headed by Bob Burgess. Our television program, "The Law and You," went into the homes of all viewers in central and northern Wyoming each Sunday afternoon. The program was manned by judges and lawyers from throughout the state and dealt with subjects of interest to laymen in the field of the law. Public reaction was uniformly favorable, even enthusiastic, and the stature of the profession materially enhanced. We extend our appreciation to KTWO-TV, Casper, for making the time for the program available to the Bar, without cost. It is hoped that such programs will be resumed here this fall and inaugurated in Cheyenne through KFBC-TV.

A start has been made in the continuing legal education of its members by the Bar through Jerry Housel and his Committee on Legal Education and Admissions. Panels composed of three members each devoted a great of time and effort to the preparation of programs of technical interest to lawyers. They have appeared throughout the State and are available to any local group of lawyers interested in improving their knowledge of the law. Your Commissioner will arrange for their meeting with you. They're great!

Law Day, U.S.A. is promoted by our Bill of Rights Committee, headed this year by Jim Barrett. Each year Wyoming's participation increases. It behooves all of us, historically and presently leaders in the defense of government under law and the rights of men, to bring to the people on May Day the true meaning of freedom. In that connection, we have forwarded to certain of the new democracies some of our old law books that they may share with us an appreciation of those rights and their defense.

The Legislature will convene in January, and we of the Bar have a monumental task confronting us. We have approved the Uniform Commercial Code for introduction and passage. This morning George Rudolph will review the Model Corporation Act with suggested changes approved by his Corporation Committee and present it for your approval. I recommend that action. Every day we are losing corporate business to other states and tolerating corporate action with no statutory authority therefor, simply because our corporation laws are inadequate. We also must present to the people before the November election the necessity of approving the amendment to the Constitution to permit corporations to be authorized to engage in business for more than a single purpose. Tomorrow morning Clarence Swainson, chairman of the sub-committee to revise the Blue Sky laws, will present the Uniform Securities Act for your approval. This is in furtherance of our duty of vigilance to protect the citizens of our State from fly-by-night stock promotions.

The State Board of Law Examiners, by reason of a budget cut by the Legislature, can no longer make financial ends meet unless the examination fee of \$15.00 for applicants is raised. Rather than have the fee determined by the Legislature they have recommended that that authority be given to the Supreme Court. The Board has also recommended that no one be permitted to take the examination for admission to the Bar of Wyoming unless he be a graduate of an accredited law school. Many of our members were not such graduates but times have changed. Unless our standards are raised to those of sister states we will acquire a reputation as an easy mark for admission. The statutory method of terminating membership in the Bar for non-payment of dues has proved excessively cumbersome. The Supreme Court has recommended a simplification. I have drawn bills to achieve each of the foregoing results and presented them to John Sullivan's Legislative Committee for their recommendation. I earnestly solicit the support of each of you for the legislative program of the Bar at the coming session.

The economics of our profession is of concern to us all. A committee headed by Elmer Scott has been asked to revise our Minimum Fee Schedule to reflect the five-year increase in our costs of doing business. You have each received copies of the proposed revisions. It will be presented for

discussion and your approval tomorrow morning. Those of you who are subscribers to the Pacific Reporter are aware of the success we achieved this year in our long-standing efforts to restrict the Pacific to only the reports of Supreme Court cases from California. This will save us some money. Harold Johnson of Rawlins suggested we do something to increase the supply of competent legal secretaries. As a result, the University has established scholarships for state-wide winners of high school contests for secretarial graduates to be conducted under the auspices of the State Bar. The Commissioners and the County Bar Associations will be asked to furnish suitable awards for state and local winners.

More than sixty per cent of our members are also members of the American Bar Association. In recognition of that high percentage we received a plaque at the ABA midwinter meeting in Chicago in February. I urge each of you to become or continue as a member of the ABA. They are the only group working for our interests at the national level, and merit our unanimous support. Contact Oliver Steadman for an application.

By coincidence, your President holds the same office on the State Board of Law Examiners. The Board not only examines applicants for admission to the Bar but is charged by statute with the duty of handling complaints of professional misconduct against lawyers. It speaks well for the Bar that serious complaints are few and far between. However, we cannot hope to successfully complain of unauthorized practice by others unless our own conduct is above reproach. Four-fifths of the complaints we receive result from the failure of a lawyer to expeditiously handle his client's business and keep him advised as to progress. This is inexcusable. On behalf of the professional standing of us all, I beseech each of you to keep on top of your work and make periodical reports to your clients.

In my opinion, one of our next big moves as a Bar should be in the field of unauthorized practice. Byron Hirst and his committee have devoted no end of time and effort to arriving at statements of principles with other professions and businesses to spell out the dividing line between their activities and the practice of law and to insure co-operation between their associations and ours. With the ground rules thus laid we are now in a position to insist, through the Courts if need be, that the people of the State of Wyoming be advised on legal matters only by those trained and competent to give such advice.

At our last annual meeting you directed me to solicit the support of the newspaper in the State in not using the names of lawyers in reporting legal proceedings unless the use of their names has a special significance as a news item. Only one letter in critical vein was received in reply, but I understand the press of the State generally feel we are our own worst enemies in that regard and that we shouldn't be telling them how to run

a newspaper. An attempt will be made to reach a better understanding with the press on the subject, but we can't expect much sympathy or support when some of our members apparently flout the canons of ethics forbidding indirect advertising by lawyers through inspiring newspaper comments on legal matters in which they are engaged. We have submitted to the Legislative Committee and the Supreme Court a request to amend the Rules to avoid any contention that a lawyer's name must appear on a service of a summons by publication. Then an effective prohibition against the use of lawyers' names in legals can be adopted if the membership so desires.

A biannual problem confronting the Bar is the inability to promptly learn of the passage of legislation affecting the practice. Proof sheets have been tried and found wanting. Bound copies of the Session laws are too long aborning. I would recommend that at the conclusion of the session the Wyoming State Bar mimeograph and mail to every lawyer a summary of such legislation becoming effective before the anticipated delivery date of the Session laws or supplements. Each of us can then obtain copies of individual Acts when necessary.

This year we will honor at the annual banquet those of our members who have spent a majority of the fifty years and more of their services as lawyers and judges in the State of Wyoming. We acknowledge that such a tribute is inadequate recognition for the inspiration and guidance we have received from them, but we do want them to know of our warm affection for and great admiration of them.

We have arranged what we think will prove to be an interesting and enlightening program for this, the forty-fifth annual meeting of the bar of Wyoming. I extend to our guests a hearty Western welcome and our most sincere appreciation for their time and effort in enabling us to share their deep knowledge of the law.

I deeply appreciate the work of Houston Williams and my fellow members of the Natrona County Bar Association in making arrangements for this meeting.

Saturday morning I will hand the gavel of the presidency to John Ilsley. I know him to be a man of ability and integrity and a fine lawyer, imbued with an appreciation of the stature and importance of our profession. Let us give him our whole-hearted support in the accomplishment of his program for the betterment of the Wyoming State Bar.

The privilege of serving as your President has been and will continue to be the most signal honor of my life. Since this is my swan song, may I leave with you one thought? Let us take pride in our profession and so conduct ourselves that by no act of ours will we ever bring reproach upon it.