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IRA SAMUEL FLORY

In Memoriam

With reverent pride the LOUISIANA LAW REVIEW dedicates this issue to the memory of the late Ira S. Flory. This token of respect and affection at best can only reflect in miniature that greater monument which Professor Flory himself erected during his thirty-six years of service to the Law School. Yet the occasion affords an opportunity to chronicle briefly a life of significant service to the legal profession, and to render imprescriptible the obligation of hundreds of Louisiana lawyers to a great teacher.

Ira S. Flory was born at Bridgewater, Rockingham County, Virginia, on August 24, 1883. Typical of his deep sense of loyalty, he never lost the feeling of being a Virginian, proud of his native State and of its role in the history of this country. He received his first collegiate training at Mt. Morris College, Mt. Morris, Illinois, from which he graduated with the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1907. Both his scholastic ability and his vocation for teaching won early recognition, for during his junior and senior years at Mt. Morris he served as an instructor in the mathematics department. In the fall following his academic graduation, he registered in the Law Department of the University of Virginia, where he studied under such distinguished legal scholars as Minor and Graves. It was a compliment to his ability and scholarship when he was designated as an instructor in law at the University of Virginia following his graduation. After three years of faculty tenure there, he resigned to accept a full professorship at the Louisiana State University Law School. This association was a most fortunate one for the latter institution, and was one which was destined, with only a two year interruption while in military service during World War I and while practicing in New York City, to continue until Mr. Flory's retirement at the end of the 1949-1950 session.

Teaching for him was both a profession and an absorbing passion. Twice during critical periods in the history of the Law School, he was called upon to assume the acting deanship. Both times he accepted only through a stern sense of duty, as he disliked administrative work and would have preferred to have been permitted to continue his teaching duties. At both times, nostalgia for the classroom caused him to relinquish his administrative duties at the earliest practicable time.

During his long career, the subjects taught by Professor Flory ran the gamut of the common law curriculum. His students of the past two decades will remember him best because of the high quality of his courses in Federal Procedure, Evidence, Bankruptcy and Negotiable Instruments.

On September 14, 1950, in the presence of a large gathering of the faculty, student-body and members of the Flory family, an enlargement of the photograph of Mr. Flory appearing in this issue was presented to the faculty and students, for hanging in the Law Library. At that time Dr. Paul M. Hebert, Dean of the University and for more than twelve years Dean of the Law School, appropriately referred to Professor Flory as the "father of the Law Library." Though indicative of only one of many contributions to the institution, the title was well-earned, as it was Mr. Flory's tireless and unselfish work which supplied the impetus for the expansion of the Law Library into one of the largest collections in the South. In the summer of 1924, during his vacation and at his own expense, Mr. Flory toured the State in a successful effort to raise sufficient funds to increase the library to the minimum requirements for the school's accreditation. The Law School's admission into the Association of American Law Schools was the almost immediate result of this effort, while approval of the school by the American Bar Association followed in little more than a year. Thus, the foundations of the present Law Library and the accredited status of the Law School can be attributed in large measure to Professor Flory.

Certain of Ira S. Flory's traits of character make the painting of any word-portrait of him exceedingly difficult. His deep humility and simplicity, and his dislike for the fulsome and ostentatious, preclude the selection of too-vivid colors. Yet those traits of character and personality which won the respect and affection of all privileged to associate with him cannot be painted in pastels.

The exceptional quality of Professor Flory's performance as a classroom teacher stemmed from a composite of unusual qualities and abilities. His meticulous preparation of his courses, supplemented by a wealth of background and current reading, permitted him to anticipate and predict developments within his fields. His ability to cut quickly to the core of things enabled him to simplify the most complex problems by stripping them of confusing non-essentials. His clarity and precision of expression has seldom been equalled by any classroom exponent of the

law. His sense of humor enlivened his courses, and his illustrative anecdotes—adapted always to emphasize the case or statute in point—have become a legend in the Law School.

A skillful classroom technique alone, however, could not have accounted for Mr. Flory's stature. That eminence resulted from more human qualities—his professional ideals, his sympathetic interest in his students, his devotion to his family, and his rugged honesty. Somehow, in the minds of the students, faculty and alumni, his daily life seemed to dignify and to exalt a service in the law, as it brought into bold relief the vast difference between a profession and a mere calling. Generations of students regarded him as a foster-father, whose counsel and advice were eagerly sought and as readily obtained. But no indolent or weakling ever found in Professor Flory's office the rationalizing sympathy which he sought. The highest standards of conduct and performance were exacted of all, and short shrift was made of those who showed an unwillingness to meet the exacting requirements of Mr. Flory's own code. Of a generous and kindly nature, he never failed in the performance of the stern duty to those whose work he regarded as unsatisfactory, or to those whose conduct failed to measure up to professional ideals. Perhaps the quality which more than any other won him the universal respect of students, associates and alumni was his rugged honesty. Calm and deliberate in reaching decisions, he possessed an ability to discern clearly the ethical factors involved, and other considerations quickly melted into inconsequence. Once he had drawn his conclusions as to what would be the just and honest course to pursue, he never faltered or yielded to circumstance or pressure. No greater asset could be possessed by any law school than the example which Ira S. Flory constantly set for those privileged to associate with him.

The indebtedness of the Louisiana State University Law School to the late Ira Samuel Flory is much too large to permit of anything more than a token payment. Perhaps some consolation may be found in the realization that Mr. Flory himself would neither have expected nor have permitted payment. To him ample compensation was afforded by that inner satisfaction resulting from an adherence to his ideals and a conscientious performance of his duty.

HENRY G. McMAHON, *Dean*