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Robert Lee Tullis

June 10, 1864-February 26, 1955

In Memoriam

With the passing of Robert Lee Tullis, Dean Emeritus of the Louisiana State University Law School, Louisiana was compelled reluctantly to yield one of her most brilliant crown jewels. The many facets of his distinguished career gave clear reflection to the splendor of his accomplishments as scholar, teacher, leader and moulder of opinion.

He was born in Tensas Parish. His fruitful life included attendance at the Louisiana State University, Vanderbilt, and the Tulane University College of Law. He received the degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1887 at the age of twenty-three.

After serving with distinction for eight years as a member of the New Orleans bar he became Secretary to the Mayor of that city. He remained in this capacity for two years. Thereafter he resumed the practice of law until he accepted appointment as Professor of Jurisprudence at the Louisiana State University in 1907. He became Dean of the Law School in 1912 and continued in that capacity until reaching the age of retirement in 1934. The story of the Law School during these formative years was the story of Dean Tullis. Indeed, Louisiana legal history owes many of its brightest pages to his steadfast and successful efforts to raise the level of legal education so that admission to the bar would attest those qualifications necessary to assume the grave responsibilities to ensue.

He was an active and vigorous member of the American and Louisiana State Bar Associations and the American Law Institute. He served for thirty-five years as the leader of the Louisiana members of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. He belonged to The Order of the Coif. Even in his late years he continued his unflagging interest in the improvement of the law and the functions and affairs of government generally as an Emeritus Member of the Council of the

Louisiana State Law Institute. His was the spirit of the crusader tempered by the grace of learning.

The Robert Lee Tullis Moot Court Competition bears his name. His regular attendance at its functions was an inspiration of profound value to the students participating in the competitions.

Fortunate indeed were those students who enjoyed the magic of his lectures. He was a master of exposition, eloquent and colorful, a raconteur of rare ability at combining the subtle and the vivid. Combined with a depth of knowledge of the law generally and particularly the law of the civilians, he possessed a matchless facility of expression that infused into his fascinated listeners the precepts of the law with which he dealt as a teacher and the high principles of personal conduct by which he was guided as a man. His courage never faltered before the seductive lure of expediency. He was an exemplar of rectitude, no less majestic than the law he loved.

And he received the affection, deference and respect of all who knew him. In him was found a man worthy of the deepest admiration, one to be emulated in all his varied attributes. His breadth of interest knew no limit. He was a devotee of the arts. The concert or the opera appealed to him no less than the cadence of the law. Beneath the dignity that characterized the manner in which he discharged the duties of his high calling, an innate and acute sense of humor told in unmistakable tones of his great humanity.

The law was his life, and to it he gave a full measure of devotion.