

## WILLIAM REYNOLDS VANCE

WILLIAM REYNOLDS VANCE served on the faculties of four schools of law, in addition to several others in which he taught during summer sessions. In three of these four schools, he served as dean. My own acquaintance and friendship with him, however, was restricted to the years in which he served as professor of law at Yale. In 1910, it was my privilege to have a part in calling him to Yale from the law school of George Washington University; and it was after his arrival here that I first met him. He had already become well known personally to the legal profession, especially by reason of his service as secretary of the Association of American Law Schools. We invited him to become a member of the Yale faculty, however, because of his known success as a teacher and legal writer.

Before Mr. Vance accepted the call to Yale, this school had been generally known as a text-book school; and he expressly made it a condition of his acceptance that he should be permitted to use the case method of instruction in his classes. The faculty here had no difficulty in assenting to that condition, inasmuch as the case method was already in use in the great majority of the courses. Indeed, one of our reasons for calling him was to strengthen our instruction force by the addition of one who was known as a successful teacher by that method. The call to him was one of the many steps being taken at the time to establish the case method of instruction and to build up an improved faculty of producing scholars.

The addition of Mr. Vance was certainly a major step in that direction; but at first it seemed to be of only slight importance. During his first year here, he was offered the deanship of the University of Minnesota Law School and was inclined to accept it. However, his sense of obligation to us prevented such acceptance at first. The offer was kept standing; and during his second year with us he accepted it. During these two years, he had more than justified our hopes; and we fully realized that we were losing one of our strongest men. He had immediately established a reputation with our students as one of their very best class-room instructors. During those two years, there had been established between him and myself the most friendly and intimate relations. No other man who is now on our faculty served with him

at that period; but Judge Clark, who recently retired from our own deanship to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, was a student in his classes.

If Yale had a grievance at Minnesota for taking Vance from us when we sorely needed him, Yale much more than evened the score later on. At Minnesota, Dean Vance at once made great progress in building up the law faculty. Among others, he called there Professors Morgan and Thurston, who are now at Harvard, and our own Ernest Lorenzen. In the process of friendly, but necessary, competition, Yale induced all three of these men to leave Minnesota for Yale, within the years of Vance's deanship there. The loss of them was undoubtedly a bitter disappointment to him. All three took an active and successful part in urging the recall of Dean Vance to the Yale Law School.

Without question, the fact that these three men had come to us, leaving vacancies that must have seemed almost impossible to fill, was one of the major influences that enabled us to induce him to return here in 1920. Although he had established himself as one of the most influential men at Minnesota, and was recognized as having the qualities of a successful administrator, he was ready to give up "deaning" and to devote himself exclusively to the classroom and to productive scholarship. This work he loved much more than the work of administration; and he often said as much to me in intimate conversation.

For the next eighteen years he was one of the most active members of the Yale faculty, his courses being in the fields of Insurance and Property. Other specialists in these lines well know the high quality of his work; and throughout the entire period he sustained his high reputation as a teacher and writer. His work and mine were not so closely related as to result in very frequent discussions of problems of law; but I well remember the faculty luncheons soon after Mr. Vance's return in which we all set about the task of convincing him of the value of the work of Wesley Hohfeld, then recently deceased. The generous appreciation that he expressed of my own efforts to explain and evaluate Hohfeld's work in analysis and terminology remains one of my pleasantest memories.

The organization of the schools within Yale University is such that Mr. Vance did not wholly escape from the problems of administration. The dean of this law school is a moderator, not a dictator. The government of the school and the direction of its policies are in the hands of the faculty, including young as well as old. Appointments to the faculty and promotions to higher rank are on the nomination of the group of professors of law. With all this, Mr. Vance was in thorough sympathy. It was at the weekly faculty luncheons and the frequent governing board meetings that I came best to know and to appreciate his service to Yale. Participation in this democratic process was very congenial to him. And

his experience in other schools, his sound judgment, and his friendly and unruffled personality, made him very effective. He was always calm and reasonable when the waters of discussion were troubled; at the same time he held and clearly expressed a firm and definite opinion; and his influence was always great in the formulation of policies and the making of decisions.

Even after his retirement as an active teacher in 1938, he continued to attend faculty meetings regularly and to participate in the transaction of school business. In the twenty years after his return here, my own association with him became continually closer and my respect and affection for him continually increased. To one who is himself not many years from retirement, the loss of such an old and valued friend and such a wise and honest counselor is hard to bear; but his friendship, his wisdom, and his strong personality will continue to endure as a sustaining memory.

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WILLIAM REYNOLDS VANCE, Professor Emeritus of the Yale Law School, died on October 23, 1940 at the age of seventy. The fact is not easy to realize or to accept. He was our friend, and his work and influence were vital in the life of the School. He took his retirement from the classroom two years ago as an opportunity for an unbroken period of other work. He devoted himself assiduously to a new edition of his casebook on Insurance, which was completed shortly before his death. This achievement must have given him deep satisfaction, although his more casual comments on it were characteristically witty and light-hearted. During the last two years, he remained as active and helpful as ever in his vigilant concern for the welfare of the School and in his constant attention to problems of policy and personnel. A distinguished career thus came happily and usefully to completion.

This was gratifying and proper, for he was a cheerful man whose life was full of usefulness to others. He was happy in his environment. He had none of the unreasoning complacency of the undisturbed, which may pass for happiness; no one was more alive to a wide range of problems or more earnest in seeking their solution. But he met those problems with a temperate perspective and a wise and understanding philosophy. In times of controversy, he was both calm and strong. His sense of humor was unfailing, but kindly and controlled — a solvent of artificial difficulties, giving balance, but not sharpness or flippancy, to his temperament. He was a friendly man, with rare personal charm and a constant and generous interest in the welfare of others. He liked

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