

**AM EMERITUS PROFESSOR
LOOKS AT
THE LAW SCHOOL
Nathan P. Feinsinger**

The last issue of the *Gargoyle* contains a discussion of the pluses and minuses of the University of Wisconsin Law School, opening with a penetrating appraisal by Justice Heffernan of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Reported on the minus side—as it has been ever since I joined the Wisconsin Law faculty in the fall of 1929—were (1) gross overcrowding of the Law School facilities, making for poor working conditions, (2) an unfavorable faculty-student ratio, (3) inadequate Law Library budget and facilities, and (4) low faculty salaries compared with salaries at other law schools of comparable status. The pluses, including a tradition of interdisciplinary teaching and research and public service, heavily outweighed the minuses.

During an unguarded moment, I made the mistake of saying to Ruth Doyle that some day I would write my appraisal of the Law School. Before one could say John Doar, Ruth asked me to write a piece for the next issue of the *Gargoyle*. I agreed, even though time was too short to seek a Ford grant to support the project. I hope Ruth—and Ford—will forgive this heresy.

My credentials: I began my teaching career at Wisconsin in the fall of 1929, intending to stay one year and then go into practice. With the principal exceptions of the war years and teaching stints at Chicago, Michigan and Stanford, I have remained on the Madison campus. I have been Emeritus Professor of Law since June 30, 1973.

Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary, Unabridged 2d edition (1971) contains the following definition of emeritus:

"having served one's time as a soldier, from emereri, to serve out one's time; e-, out, and mereri, to serve, earn, merit. retired from long, active service on account of age or infirmity, but retaining one's rank or title; as, professor emeritus."

A memorandum from the Secretary of the Faculty dated December 20, 1973, dealing with the subject of "Emeritus status for faculty members" states, in part:

"The 'emeritus' designation is an honorary title granted to members of the faculty after retirement . . ."

"The title is not conferred automatically upon all retiring faculty members, although a large percentage of retirees receive emeritus status. *The failure to grant emeritus status is usually the result of oversight on the part of the individual's department and college . . .*"
(Emphasis supplied)

I know of no case in which the emeritus status was sought or recommended, and denied.

When I joined the Law faculty, Dean Harry Sanger Richards had just died and Oliver S. Rundell was Acting Dean. At that time there were 10 full time and 4 part time members of the faculty and 69 members of the graduating class. Glenn Frank was President of the University. After him came, successively, George C. Sellery, Acting President; Clarence A. Dykstra, Edwin B. Fred, Conrad A. Elvehjem, Fred Harvey Harrington and currently John C. Weaver. Following are the Law Deans under whom I served: Oliver S. Rundell, Acting Dean, 1929-32 and 1943-45; Lloyd K. Garrison, 1932-45; Oliver S. Rundell, 1945-53; John Ritchie, 1953-57; George H. Young, 1958-68; Spencer L. Kimball, 1968-72; and currently George Bunn, who began his term as Dean in 1972.

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