Woodbridge Feted on Retirement
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Dudley Warner Woodbridge, for almost forty years a fixture of the law faculty of the College of William and Mary, was the center of a succession of testimonial events which highlighted the annual Law Week May 4-7. The spring issue of the William and Mary Law Review was dedicated to him and featured a series of articles by former colleagues or students (see story elsewhere in this issue).

Chief event of honor was the all-Law School banquet sponsored by the local chapter of Phi Alpha Delta legal fraternity May 4 at the Virginia Room of the Williamsburg Conference Center. Judge Walter E. Hoffman, former law faculty member and now judge of the United States Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, was the main speaker of the evening, reminiscing on various experiences he had shared with the dean and professor emeritus (Continued on Page 3)
over the years. Dr. Davis Y. Paschall, president of the College, was another of the speakers who paid special tribute to Professor and Mrs. Woodbridge on the occasion.

Robert E. Redding of Washington, D. C., Second Supreme Vice-Justice of Phi Alpha Delta, represented the national office at the testimonial and spoke a brief greeting to the honoree. Craig Dana, newly-elected Justice of the George Wythe chapter, then presented Professor Woodbridge with a bound volume of letters from a large number of former students, friends and associates.

Professor Woodbridge's response to these various tributes is printed in full on pages 5 and 6 of this issue.

The College Board of Visitors named Woodbridge Chancellor Professor of Law Emeritus at its spring meeting, and had him as its guest of honor at a luncheon on that occasion. The action of the William and Mary Law School Association in honoring the longtime faculty member is reported in a separate story.
Response of Dudley Warner Woodbridge

Wednesday, May 4, 1966

Mr. Cowardin, Judge Moffman, President Paschall, Brother Redding and friends:

You know and I know that under the law I am entitled to equal time, but rather than stand on any such right I am going to share with you three special experiences. I do this all the more readily because every one here has already shared in one or more of them.

At the moment I feel a desperate need for a counterweight to help me keep a proper sense of balance, and what better counterweight could there be than for me to tell you my most humiliating experience? I do this all the more readily because everyone here has already shared in one or more of them.

At an informal gathering of law students Mr. (now the Rev.) Benjamin R. Bruner took me to one side and in the most disarming manner possible said to me, “Some of the people here are having an argument about a question that has come up, namely, Is it at the present time lawful in Virginia for a man to marry his widow’s sister? Some think it is, but Charlie Marshall over there has doubts about it. At any rate we would all like the benefit of your relearning.” Believe it or not, I answered without a moment’s hesitation, “It used to be illegal for a man to marry his widow’s sister, but in 1888 the statute forbidding such marriages was repealed, so, at the present time it is perfectly lawful for a man to marry his widow’s sister provided of course she is not already married to someone else.” A triumphant look shot across Mr. Bruner’s face as he said, “Well, I guess that settles the matter. It used to be illegal, but it’s O.K. today for a man to marry his widow’s sister.”

Mr. Marshall feigned a look of deep contemplation followed by one of extreme puzzlement. Then he said, “I still can’t see how such a marriage could be legal. A man would have to die to have a widow, and surely you will take judicial notice of the fact that a dead man could not possibly say ‘I do’ at the proper time and place during the ceremony in which he marries his widow’s sister, and even if he could, I don’t see how such a marriage could ever be finally consummated, and even if it could it would be bigamous and hence void for the groom’s first wife would still be living and undivorced; and I can’t see what 1888 has to do with it, for surely a man who dies after 1888 is just as dead as one who dies before that date.”

Everyone then laughed good naturedly as I received a grade of minus 2—the lowest grade known to the Law School.

And next, at the other end of the gamut, let me tell you of our most glorious experience, and,

*The above account is not meant in any way to indicate that the parties involved had any but the best motives in mind. Please note I am telling a joke on myself and everything at the time was done in friendly give and take among a very small group and in keeping with a great truth "a little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men."
but for this experience, none of us would be here this evening. It was when one saw the friends of the Law School spring forth like minute men and save her from an ignominious death.

In the late 1930s, because of the great depression and the lowered birth rate thereof there was an insistent demand for the utmost economy in the expenditure of state funds and for the abolition of every vestige of possible unnecessary duplication of state services.

Notwithstanding all this, imagine my surprise and consternation when I picked up my Sunday Times Dispatch one spring morning and read the following headlines, "Board of Visitors abolishes Law School at William and Mary." I could hardly believe my eyes. My heart sank within me. I rushed to the telephone and called my illustrious predecessor, the late Dean Theodore Sullivan Cox. As soon as he heard my voice, he said, "Yes, Dudley, it is true. I just did not have the heart to tell you." I excitedly said, "What can we do?" He replied in a calm and firm voice, "Nothing. There is an obvious possibility of a conflict of interest, for what is best for us is not necessarily for the best interest of the College."

This is the way Ted Cox taught legal ethics.

You have heard it said that action and reaction are always equal, but don't you believe that word "always."

The law students reacted: We don't want a degree from a dead law school.

Our friends from the University of Virginia reacted: There is no competition between light-houses.

The leaders of the American Bar reacted: How could the Board of Visitors be so lacking in vision and imagination as to abolish the Law School associated with Jefferson, Marshall and Wythe—the first in the United States to be part of a College or University—and ideally located at the College of William and Mary in historic restored Williamsburg?

But the greatest reaction came from the friends and alumni of the College: Is it possible that the members of the Board of Visitors had never thrilled to the words of the College's Alma Mater?

Bless the College of our Fathers;
Let her never die.

How else could they be so sacrilegious as to kill that which it was their duty to cherish, protect and advance!

How else could they trample like Vandals on the traditions, heritage and priorities of the College!

But on the very next Saturday afternoon: Hark upon the gale! The College bell is tolling. There are no Saturday afternoon classes. What has happened?

We were not long in finding out! The Board of Visitors had reconvened, re-considered and rescinded their action of the previous Saturday and had decided that the best interests of the College would be served by their strengthening and supporting the law school in every way that lay within their power.

When the law students heard this, as if by instinct, they rushed pell-mell to the Wren Building where with the beaming acquiescence of one of the College's greatest friends of all times, the late Doc Henry C. Billups, they tolled that bell as they have never before or since tolled any bell.

Ring out jubilant bell to the jubilant sky;
Our law school is not going to die.

And now we come to our most touching experience:
We have just had it this evening at your hands. We would not be human if we were not profoundly touched, deeply moved and completely overwhelmed!

We thank Judge Hoffman, President Paschal, and Robert Redding for their kind and generous remarks.

It is a lovely thing when two young people who are engaged, mutually how each loves the other but it is still more lovely if that love is symbolized by a tangible token such as an engagement ring. It is a wonderful thing for teacher and student to have mutual respect and affection but it is even more wonderful when these sentiments are symbolized by some tangible token such as the memento album that has been presented to us this evening. Perhaps I can make my point clearer by a mathematical statement in simple ratio and proportion:—

This memento album
Is to me
As a diamond ring is
To a bride to be—
A symbol of a priceless mutual sentiment.

We wish to thank the sponsors of this dinner and all who helped in any way.

If it was your purpose to make this occasion the most delightful and memorable social event of our entire lives you have succeeded beyond your fondest expectations.

But please note, those who toss bouquets ought not to be surprised if some bouquets are tossed back.

But seriously, where in all this wide, wide world could Ruby and I have found finer people and finer groups of people with whom to work and live? A mere enumeration of these groups (with the understanding that the expression of someone is not to be taken as the exclusion of any other) will answer this rhetorical question. The thirty-nine generations of eager law students I have been privileged to teach, the friends and alumni of the law school whose deep devotion and unflagging interest and zeal have been constant sources of inspiration, the Boards of Visitors who have guided the destiny of the college and of the law school down through the years, the five dedicated college presidents and their able administrative assistants, the splendid faculties of the law school and of the college, the indefatigable student and student-wipe part time secretaries and later a full time one hundred per cent professional secretary—all jewels of the finest water, our friends and neighbors in and about the City of Williamsburg of all ages and from all walks of life, members of the honor councils, of the bar associations, of the legal fraternities, of the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners and their examinees, of the faculties of our sister law schools, the Honorable Judges of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and of the United States of America—all seeking to promote in their own way one of humanity's noblest objectives—the attainment of the most nearly perfect justice possible.

You have given us a wonderfully full and happy life. It is our fervent wish that each of you may have the same. We thank you!