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LAW MEN—Dean Dudley Woodbridge, of William and Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law, stands before a portrait of Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, professor of law at William and Mary from 1835 to 1851.

Read Magazine Ad

W&M's Law Dean Began Career on 'Pure Chance'

By Jo Hyde
 WILLIAMSBURG, March 31.—A magazine advertisement and a quirk of fate began a distinguished teaching career.

Dr. Dudley W. Woodbridge, dean of William and Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law, attributed his beginning to "pure chance."

The years following World War I were hectic for the chancellor-professor and his wife. After obtaining an A. B. degree in economics and serving with the Army Medical Corps, and at a time when he had no job and a family on the way, Dr. Woodbridge spotted an advertisement for a correspondence course in law.

"The ad said lawyers make from \$5,000 to \$25,000 a year," he said, "but it didn't say that you can't pass a bar examination with a correspondence course."

Turned Job Down
 Financial pressure caused him to apply for a job as a railway postal clerk. When months of waiting brought no reply from the railway, Dr. Woodbridge enrolled in the law school at the University of Illinois. The correspondence course had awakened his legal mind, and when the railway job finally came through he turned it down in favor of working his way towards a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree and a teaching career.

The career began at William and Mary in 1927. The initial lull of money faded as Dr. Woodbridge became absorbed in the law and in his students.

His dual talent—teaching and law—brings scores of aspiring Virginia lawyers to his review

classes for the bar examination. Besides his 14-hour yearly teaching load here, he conducts night classes here and in Newport News and law review classes at the University of Virginia and Washington and Lee. Summers have seen him teaching at the Universities of Florida, Illinois and Virginia.

Spare-time Athlete
 Noted locally for his interest in young people, the professor opens the ice skating pond near his home to all youngsters of the town. A spare-time athlete, he said: "I guess I've taught hundreds of children how to play tennis, ride bicycles and ice skate."

Dr. Woodbridge, a native of Ohio, confessed that he once hoped that one of his own children might follow his profession. "My daughter always promised me that she would become a lawyer," he smiled, then explained that she was sidetracked into graduate work in mathematics. When he sent one of his three sons to France to study the language of international law, the boy became so interested in romance language that he obtained a Ph.D. in it.

When Dr. Woodbridge came to William and Mary, the law school was small and non-accredited. "The first job was to raise standards," he said.

Dr. Woodbridge, made dean in 1930, has witnessed changes in staff, the struggle to build up the law library, many ups and downs of the college and the gradual growth of the law school. Though it is now accredited, he still sees a long and challenging road before the law school.