

1934

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Editors of the Daily Press

Repository Citation

Editors of the Daily Press, "William And Mary's School Of Jurisprudence Now Has Full Faculty And Library" (1934). *History of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law*. 23.
<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/history/23>

NEWS OF WILL

William And Mary's School Of Jurisprudence Now Has Full Faculty And Library

Rigid Requirements for Degrees in Law Established at College in 1792; Student Body Now 51

(WILLIAMSBURG BUREAU)

Back in the early 60's when Virginians were being called to arms in defense of the Southland, the president, faculty and students of the College of William and Mary all left the ancient halls of the college to join the armies of the Confederacy. Among those who joined the ranks of the "Lost Cause" was Charles Morris, professor of law at the college.

Sixty-one years passed before there was another in the chair of law, second oldest chair of Common Law in the world.

The chair of law at the College of William and Mary was created by the college board of visitors Dec. 4, 1779 when that body passed a resolution through the influence of Thomas Jefferson, who was then governor of the state, to create a professorship of Law of Police. The chair at the college is antedated only by the Vinerian professorship at Oxford, which was established 21 years earlier and held by Sir William Blackstone. The William and Mary chair is the second in the English-speaking world. George Wythe was the first professor of law at the college.

The school taught continuously until the outbreak of hostilities in 1861. It remained dormant until Dr. J. A. C. Chandler, late president of the college, through the assistance of Robert M. Hughes and others, was able to reopen the school in 1922. It was combined with the Marshall-Wythe school of government and citizenship until 1932 when it became a separate entity under the name of the School of Jurisprudence.

The first professor of law after the revival in 1922 was Oscar Lane Shewmake. He was followed by the late William E. Hamilton, whose death in 1929 removed a brilliant scholar from the faculty.

Dr. Hamilton was succeeded by Prof. Theodore Sullivan Cox, who became dean of the school in 1932. In that year, the school was placed on the "approved list" of the American Bar association. The first law degree conferred by the college since 1869 was granted to Peter Paul Peebler of Williamsburg in 1924. Mr. Peebles joined the faculty of the school in that year and has remained.

In addition to Dean Cox and Professor Peebles, the faculty is composed of Dudley Warner Woodbridge, who joined the faculty in 1928, John Latane Lewis, whose addition to the faculty in 1932 gave the school a faculty of four all holding advanced degrees or with wide experience in research.

In 1933, Walter Edward Hoffman of Norfolk was appointed a part-time instructor conducting courses in Pleading and Practice.

The school is housed in the historic Brafferton building, built in 1773 and restored in 1930. Its library, containing several thousand volumes, occupies the third floor of the college library. The student body is 51 and is on the increase, following the decided shrinkage which followed the raising of standards two years ago.

In a recent article in the Alumni Gazette, Professor Cox spoke of the school as follows:

"Fortunately the way regarding academic preparation had long since been charted, for the ancient statutes of the college, compiled in 1792, declared that a candidate for the law degree should have the requirements for the degree of bachelor of arts as well as being learned in the law. The first institution in America to recognize the necessity of such academic preparation, the College of William and Mary remains unique in Virginia and is one of about a half dozen in the South to demand an academic degree as a prerequisite to the law degree. While subjects in Jurisprudence may be studied during the third and fourth academic years, no one is admitted to candidacy for the law degree unless he possess an academic degree or be taking the combined six year course in this institution for the two degrees. Graduates in Jurisprudence have been uniformly successful in being admitted to the bar.

"But more important than the mere revival of law study at William and Mary is the perpetuation of the concept that law is a part of the whole field of education and is not to be segregated and left for exploration solely by potential craftsmen in professional practice, a sociological rather than a legistic view. In fulfillment of this concept the School of Jurisprudence, autonomous though it is, co-operates closely with other departments of the college, particularly the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship and the School of Economics and Business Administration. The Jurisprudence faculty is included in the faculties of both of these other schools to the extent to which law courses form a part of the curricula in Government of Economics. Properly qualified students from other fields may study certain subjects in jurisprudence for many of which credit is allowed in other departments. Of the students enrolled in Jurisprudence, only about a third view the law with an eye toward professional practice. The standard three year law curriculum is augmented by courses in the history and theory of jurisprudence seldom taught in law schools except as graduate subjects.

"The tradition of law study, bequeathed by Thomas Jefferson and carried on continuously for 82 years by George Wythe, St. George Tucker, Lucian Minor and others, forms one of the proudest intellectual heritages which Virginia possesses and features generations will have cause to remember with gratitude the man whose vision and courage preserved and revived it—J. A. C. Chandler, late president of the College of William and Mary Virginia."