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Order of the Coif

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ORDER OF THE COIF

The application of the faculty of the College of Law for a charter to establish a Chapter of the Order of the Coif at West Virginia University has been granted and an organization perfected, the members of the faculty constituting the charter members of the Chapter. The officers are: Joseph Warren Madden (Chicago Chapter, 1914) President; James R. Trotter (West Virginia Chapter, 1925) Vice-President; Edmund C. Dickinson (Michigan Chapter, 1911) Secretary-Treasurer.

The Order of the Coif is an honorary legal society based upon scholarship. Its members are selected from the 10 per cent of the senior class in the College of Law who rank highest in scholarship. The Order is a revival of the English Order of the Coif which

was the most ancient and one of the most honored institutions of the common law. It was an association of lawyers, never large in number, from whose numbers exclusively the judges of the Court of Common Pleas were appointed, and who for centuries had the sole right to appear as barristers in that court. Later, the judges of the Kings Bench and the Exchequer were also appointed from among the Serjeants of the Coif.

The Order takes its name from the word used to designate the cap which all the members of the Order were compelled to wear. This cap or coif was originally of white lawn or silk, forming a close-fitting hood, to be seen today in old engravings, pictures, and effigies of distinguished Judges and Serjeants. This coif was not to be taken off, even in the royal presence.

The roll of members of the Coif includes the names of many of the greatest lawyers in English history, including Coke, Littleton, Dugdale, Fortesque, Bacon, Blackstone, Blackburn, Glanville, Campbell, Coleridge, and many others.

The American Order of the Coif is an outgrowth of an earlier society known as Theta Kappa Nu, which was founded at the University of Illinois in 1902 for the purpose of promoting scholarship among American law students. The name was changed to the Order of the Coif in 1911. The Chapter roll of the Order in 1916 was as follows: University of Chicago, Cornell University, University of Illinois, University of Iowa, Leland Stanford Junior University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Virginia, Western Reserve University, University of Wisconsin and Yale University.

The Chapter has elected the following men from the 1925 graduating class:

Archibald Martin Cantrall, Morgantown, W. Va.

Robert Miller Muir, Havaco, W. Va.

Harry Lambright Snyder, Jr., Shepherdstown, W. Va.

The election of members of former graduating classes who would have been eligible to the Order if the local chapter had been in existence is permitted by the Constitution. This provision, however, is limited to those who have graduated since the law course has been a three year course.