Address of Acceptance

Frank B. Trotter
President, West Virginia University

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ADDRESS OF ACCEPTANCE

BY FRANK B. TROTTER*

Governor Morgan:

On behalf of West Virginia University, I accept this key and the trust it symbolizes; and I rejoice that it has fallen to my lot to perform this part in this ceremony of dedication; not only on behalf of the University do I accept it but on behalf of the controlling Boards who have made this exercise possible; and in the name of the Faculty of the College of Law, in the name of the vast body of students who are to profit by it in the years to come, and in the name of every seeker after knowledge, and in the name of every lover of justice who shall hereafter cross its threshold, I extend thanks to all who have in any way contributed toward making this new addition to the University possible, and I promise, on behalf of all to whose use it is extended, that it shall be devoted sacredly to the better preparation of all who enter its doors, for life's activities and responsibilities. And now, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The opening of a new and permanent building for the College of Law of West Virginia University arouses more or less curiosity, at least in the minds of the younger generation who are to be the beneficiaries of it, in regard to the beginning and the history of the college, as well as some concern for its future work and policy. Its beginning may be referred very properly to the day of small things and should teach us that such are not to be despised. Its history is naturally a story of gradual but continued progress over a period of forty-five years, under difficulties that often became embarrassments, but relieved always by a beneficient legislature, though it must be admitted, at times somewhat tardy. It would be full of interest if fully recounted but time forbids more than a mere outline. Its future is in the hands of a competent Dean and Faculty, supported by governing Boards devoted to its interests and pledged to its success.

The College of Law had its inception as nearly as can be ascen-

* President, West Virginia University.
tained from the minutes of the Board of Regents at a meeting held in University Hall, on June 27, 1878, when the following order was passed:

"On motion it is ordered, That the chair of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene be established in the University and also a chair of Law and Equity and that the salaries attached to said Professorships be fixed at five hundred dollars per annum each. The terms of employment of the persons filling said professorships to be not less than one term in each year, and the Board proceeding to fill the said chairs the Hon. Daniel B. Lucas was placed in nomination for the chair of Law and Equity and the vote being taken by ayes and noes, Mr. Lucas secured seven votes, being all the votes cast. Hon. Daniel B. Lucas was, therefore, declared elected to the chair of Law and Equity."

Although duly elected, Mr. Lucas never took up the work as instructor, explained by the following note in the catalogue of 1878-9:

"The Board of Regents at their meeting in June, 1878, took the first step toward the creation of departments of Law and Medicine in the University. A chair of Law and Equity was established and the Hon. D. B. Lucas, of Jefferson County, was elected to fill the same. Mr. Lucas having signified his declination, the Executive Committee, upon the proper recommendations, elected Mr. St. George Tucker Brooke, of Jefferson County, to fill the vacancy. Mr. Brooke's lectures during the years have demonstrated his capacity and fitness for the professorship he fills, and the authorities of the University entertain the confident hope that the school of Law will soon be one of its most attractive features."

The minutes of June 9, 1879, state that the Board of Regents, following the recommendations of the authorities, continued the department of Law and elected Prof. Brooke to the chair of Law and Equity, fixing the salary at this time at one thousand dollars for at least two terms work. Thus the present effective and successful college of Law was started just forty-five years ago as a department only of the University, with one professor, for one term, at $500 per annum. It could scarcely have been inaugurated on a smaller scale, except in the size of the man who started it and remained as the chief force in it for thirty years, during which time he impressed himself on the state as few other men have done, and set a standard for lawyers much in advance of his time and of the other educational efforts of the state. In spite of the fact, however, that this was only a department and no mention is
made in the catalogue of graduation or degrees until 1882-83, in which it states that the degree of LL.B. will hereafter be conferred, the degree was conferred at the end of the first year of its existence—that is, at Commencement of 1879, and happily the recipient of that first degree is with us today and will have a part in the program on this most auspicious occasion. In 1882, following the example of the University of Virginia, all departments were designated as schools, hence this became the school of Law and continued thus until 1886, when it was re-christened as the department of Law and so continued until 1896, when it became the College of Law.

In 1884 the work of the department had so increased that another instructor being deemed necessary, Prof. W. P. Willey, who had been elected Professor of History and Metaphysics in 1883, was relieved of the Metaphysics and made Professor of History and of Equity, Jurisprudence and Commercial Law. Thus began a service of thirty or more years that ranks on the same plane with that of his colleague and associate, Prof. Brooke, in fidelity to purpose and impression on the Bar of the state. These two men carried on the work by themselves until 1895, when Judge Okey Johnson was elected Dean of the Law School and Professor of Constitutional and International Law, and sometime during the first year of his service as Dean the name was changed to College of Law, whether by action of the Board of Regents or otherwise it does not appear. Judge Johnson served as dean until his death in June, 1903. After this Dr. Brooke served as Acting Dean until 1906, when, on July 17, Charles Edgar Hogg, of Pt. Pleasant, was elected Dean. His services lasted until June, 1913, and following his resignation, the work of the dean’s office was carried on for one year by Professors Willey, Trotter and Wells, until the election of Henry Craig Jones in 1914, to whom a very large part of the later success of the college is due. Up until his advent high school graduation was the only requirement for entrance for candidates for the LL.B. degree and large numbers who could not offer the entrance requirements were admitted as candidates for a certificate or diploma in law. Dean Jones at once set about the work of raising the standards of entrance and of graduation; in 1915 a year of college work was added to the requirements for entrance, and the law course was extended to three years, thus making the requirements for graduation four years of college work, at which it has stood until the present time, with the announcement, however, that students entering in September, 1924,
must offer two years of college work. Dean Jones also began soon after he took up his work plans and agitation for better quarters, equipment, and support for the college; as a result of his efforts, combined with those of the Board of Control and the Board of Education and others in authority, the Legislature in March, 1919, appropriated $125,000. for a building for the College of Law; plans and specifications were prepared by Mr. C. W. Bates of Wheeling, but on taking bids, the Board of Control found that the amount appropriated was insufficient for the needs, and that it would be necessary to await the next session of the legislature, a delay of many months; however, in May, 1921, a supplemental appropriation of $100,000. was granted, and soon after this the present site was purchased and contract let for the building we are to formally receive today. In the meantime, however, Dean Jones was called to the University of Illinois as Dean, and the present incumbent, Dean Madden, was elected in 1921 and has most efficiently carried on the work ever since. As noted above the first LL.B. degree was granted in 1879 and since that time 474 have been granted and the recipients are found in all quarters of the state and in general are practitioners of a high order and eminently successful. The certificate or diploma course has been discontinued and all the students are candidates for the degree, with the exception now and then of a special student. So much for the beginning and history of the College of Law of West Virginia University. What now of the future? The demands of the state and the needs of the students will in a large measure determine the work and the output in the years to come. What will the state need? As business increases and development of the state’s resources reaches larger proportions many more lawyers will be needed. It is fair to suppose that through death, business inroads, retirement, etc., each county will need two new lawyers each year, and that at least one-half of them should be prepared in their own University? If this guess is correct, we should turn out, prepared and ready for practice, fifty-five lawyers each year, which would mean an attendance of one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy-five students, which attendance can well be handled in the new building and by our present faculty. If the state demands more than this, I am sure means to supply it will be forthcoming through the usual legislative channels. What are the needs of the students? Obviously the answer is the best training and preparation possible. West Virginia youth are sturdy and generally industrious, and like most mountaineers come to
maturity a little later than those from older and more gentle climes, but nevertheless they should have preparation adequate, and surely that will fit them to cope with those prepared elsewhere; therefore, the College of Law of West Virginia University must be ample in capacity to prepare such numbers as the state demands and in quality second to none. We should not be satisfied, then, because we are in class A, or because we have a new building, or because the state is willing to provide faculty and library the best possible, but these facilities must be within reach of the humblest student in the state if he is in earnest and our output must be second to none.

And now, Dean Madden of the College of Law:

I in turn present to you this key and impress on you all the duties that this implies. You, under direction of the Board that elected you and with the aid and support of the President of the University, are to see to it that it becomes, not a monument of brick and stone to be admired by those who chance to pass by, but a veritable temple of learning, a shrine not for hero worshipers but for real seekers after truth, and a mecca for those who would know the law. Good men have gone before you, and with no accommodations or equipment have given to the state some great lawyers; yours it is with your greater advantages to carry this work to greater heights and, as the needs of the world increase, to prepare men capable of meeting these needs. The legislature has done its part, the governing Boards have done their part, the President is with you in every effort, therefore, I adjure you, remember that all this is for naught if it is not devoted sacredly to the upbuilding of the young men and women who seek training therein.