Class of 1886

Minutes of Reunion

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To the Members of the Law Class of '86, U. of M., and Friends:

I am enclosing herewith and mailing you a copy of the Minutes of the meeting celebrating our 50th Anniversary at Ann Arbor on June 17th and 18th, 1936. To those of the Class who were not present it may be interesting; and to those who were present, to recall to their minds what occurred.

A list of the friends of the Class Officers' Council, affiliate of the Alumni Association, has been forwarded to me. Also a request that I mail a copy of the Minutes of this Anniversary to this list. As I said to the Secretary, it would probably be a waste of paper and postage—it will be asking a good deal even of the Class to read the Minutes, let alone outsiders. If, however, any of our friends do take the time to read any part of the Minutes, I would be very glad to hear from them with suggestions as to how a class secretary may be able to keep up the enthusiasm of the Class without having to do a lot of work.

We're going back June 19th for another anniversary celebration—the 55th. Have our headquarters at the Helen Newberry residence, in conjunction with the Emeritus Club. We are not quite so young and active as we were. We have lost 16 in the last five years, leaving only 22. We hope that ten will be able to come back. Five has been the largest number of any class heretofore reporting after 55 years.

Wishing you all good luck, and with kindest regards, I am

Very truly yours,

JOHN T. MOFFIT, Secretary.
1886 — 1936 — 50 years—one half of a
century! The Law Class which graduated at
Ann Arbor July 1st, 1886 has been now out in
a cruel world, struggling for an existence for
all these years. At the close of our reunion in
1931, one of the members, who never does
any work and is always enthusiastic about the
reunions, moved, and it was unanimously car­
rried, that a reunion—the 50th Anniversary—
be held in 1936. Oh, how easy it is for some­
one else to tell you what to do! Little did our
Classmate appreciate the amount of work
there would be involved in the next five
years in order to round up this class! At that time
our record showed that there were still 54 of
us living.

I have been informed by the good ones
that they are able to arrange for their re­
sunions and get their members back without
much work. Their classmates are far dif­
ferent from mine and I wish that someone
could put this spirit in the Law Class of 1886.

This reunion really started June 16th,
1936,—a letter from Mrs. Ralph Aldrich re­
calling to me that this was reunion year. It
is very fortunate that I had not forgotten it,
recalling the fact that Ralph during his life
had always attended the reunions.

Geo. Ladd Munn wrote that he had re­
turned from Seattle back to Freeport, the
town of his birth.

Proof was being read that morning on the
class directory when news came of the death
of Mr. Lydick. The proof was corrected
adding one more death to our list of 76 and
reducing the living to 38. I boxed, and
shipped to the Memorial Building, our com­
plete set of letter files. I felt very proud of
the files and hoped the Class would see them
in order to appreciate a little the work that
had been done. The shipment did not arrive
until the reunion was over. We had in that
file a complete list of all letters received from
1896, together with my replies, also all sorts
and kinds of newspaper clippings about the
different members of the Class.
June 17th, 1936.

Some belated letters; left for Chicago. Spent the night with my daughter, Mrs. H. Y. Platner; weather warm; wonderful crops thru Iowa and Illinois; farmers cutting alfalfa and clover; others plowing corn—and such fine looking corn!

Thursday, June 18th, 1936.

Notice had been sent out as to what train we should travel on from Chicago. Met A. E. Helmick, of Minneapolis, on train. His only previous attendance being in 1921 when he met his old room-mate, Bronson. Such a good visit! Bronson was a regular attendant. The old-timers remember how these old room-mates in 1921 walked around the campus and our meeting place with their arms around each other as unconsciously as a couple of school girls! It was their last visit—Bronson came back in 1926 and 1931. At each of these times Helmick, who had sworn he would never miss another reunion, was prevented by illness. We lost Bronson on December 22nd, 1932.

J. W. Houder, of Rock Island, also shipped on this train. A fine visit. H. C. Gilbert, of Minneapolis, who has never been at a reunion,—he had with him the Class Program of our Class Day exercises—all the persons on the program exercises gone except the humorist, C. M. Rice, of Bentonville, Arkansas, who had written:

"Have made many thousands of dollars. Expected to give something to each member of the Class, but lost it all; and have lost also somewhat my power of locomotion—not able to attend."

Also John J. McHale, now 78 years old, of Minneapolis, who was with us the first year, 1884-'85, but did not return to finish, has been in the practice all these years.

At Jackson that regular attendant and slave of the Class, and of the people, John I. Breck, got on the train. On arrival at depot the usual reception committee—it has never failed. The members of the Class who have arrived in Ann Arbor always come to greet us. I presume all other classes have the custom of meeting the new arrivals and their Secretary. I think at that train, at the time of every reunion, men whom the Secretary
thought he would hardly be fit to lace their shoes, come to greet the incoming members and just pick up bodily the various grips, briefcases and packages of memoranda and carry them with care. Someone said to the Secretary, when they saw the various encumbrances with which he was loaded, that the only thing that apparently he had missed bringing was the birdcage!

H. W. Nieman, of Elmore, Ohio, and Volney Miller, of Union City, Indiana, had their cars ready to haul us to the Betsy Barbour house, which had been reserved,—Breck having made the reservations last year so that we would be sure of quarters, sometimes hard to get if reservations are not made early! We were quartered in the Betsy Barbour House in 1926 and 1931, and now in 1936—apparently fixtures!

Friday Morning, June 19, 1936,
Class called to order. Lincoln Avery; John Irwin Breck; Henry Clark Gilbert; Joseph Buckner Gill; James Delbert Haff; Ambrose Edgel Helmick; Jacob Warren Houder; Walter Scott Meeker; Volney Miller; John T. Moffit; Henry William Nieman; Kelly S. Searl; and John J. McHale;—thirteen answered roll call,—several were accompanied by members of their families. The deaths of President Crawford and Vice President Spears were announced. Lincoln Avery was selected as President.

Following the usual practice, arrangements had been made to call upon the President. We all appreciate that that would not be possible,—for the President to give time to meet each class—hundreds and hundreds of them! This custom, however, was established back in President Angell's time—was followed through the administrations of Dr. Hutchins, Dr. Little, and Dr. Burton; and it has become so well established that Dr. Ruthven was almost compelled to give us a few minutes.

Mr. Avery did the honors, and said:—

"Mr. President:

We are all very happy indeed to meet with you this beautiful June morning. In making this call, we are only following a custom of the Class of '86 in presenting ourselves to the President at our reunions that we have held every five years since graduation, with the exception that our first reunion was ten years after graduating.
Judge Moffit has said that the members of '86 present have selected me to speak for the Class at this meeting you have so graciously accorded to us. It is not often the Judge is wrong, but I cannot let the occasion pass by having the Class held responsible for choosing me when John—as we all know him—is wholly responsible for my selection to say something interesting and agreeable about the Law Class of 1886.

There are thirty-eight living members of our Class. There are sixteen at this reunion. There were one hundred and sixteen members that completed the two years' course then given in the Law School, and strange as it may now seem, every member was graduated, all receiving the degree of L. L. B. This does not mean that the whole class had exceptional ability; neither is it a reflection on the character of the instruction given by the Law Faculty, for in those days we had truly great instructors. It is fitting to recall a few of those truly great professors. There was the scholarly Judge Cooley; the fatherly Professor Kent; Michigan's outstanding trial lawyer, Otto Kerchner; Henry Wade Rogers, then a young man, who later became a U. S. Circuit Judge; and Harry B. Hutchins. It was my privilege to know Professor Hutchens before he came to the U. of M. He was a practising attorney in Port Huron. He was then, as always, a splendidly groomed and fine looking man.

These were the men that gave us our foundation for such success as we have achieved in the profession. Our youthful contact with such great minds brought out the best that was in us and I believe is in a large measure responsible for the loyal spirit the Law Class of '86 has constantly manifested for the U. of M. Law School.

I recall an interesting circumstance in connection with the graduation of all members of our Class. Somehow it was learned that there were three members of the Class that the faculty were seriously considering should not be graduated. When this became known, the human impulse to help these unfortunate three was aroused. We concluded to appeal to the Faculty, hoping so save the unfortunate three. We resorted to that then constitutional right of petition with the result
that the Faculty melted and all members of
the Class received diplomas. We always sus-
pected John T. Moffit as being responsible for
originating the petition, for John was then,
as ever since, always doing something fine
for the fellow in need. I understand the pet-
tition method of granting diplomas has since
that time been abolished. Whether wisely or
not I do not venture an opinion.

Judge Moffit, when he requested me to do
this talking, cautioned me not to indulge in
any adulation of him, and so far as possible,
I am following his request; but, Mr. President,
you are well aware, as every member of the
'86 Law Class so well knows, that except for
John Moffit's persistent and repeated efforts
as our Secretary, few, if any, of us would be
here at this time. He is beyond question the
outstanding U. of M. Class Secretary. His ac-
ccurate and exhaustive records of every mem-
er of our Class represents a spirit of devo-
tion to the U. of M. not equalled by any other
Secretary." At this point President Ruthven
interrupted, turning to Judge Moffit, he asked:
"Have you told the Class?" The Secretary
answered: "No, I have kept the faith, as I
told you I would do, so that you might give
out the information yourself." The President
then stated to the Class that the Honorary De-
gree of Master of Laws would be conferred
upon Judge Moffit at the commencement ex-
cercises tomorrow. Mr. Avery then continued
saying:—

"Mr. President, we all thank you for this
information and I know every absent Alumni
of the Law Class of '86 will be greatly pleased
that John has been so honored. We appreciate
this great honor that will be bestowed
on Judge Moffit. It is a most fitting and de-
served distinction because of his devotion to
the members of '86 Law, and also because of
his eminence as a jurist in his native State.

It is true of us, as of other classes, that
all did not follow the active practice of the
profession; some entered public life—we have
had one U. S. Senator and many Congress-
men—but the great majority entered upon
active practice and many of those now living
still continue to practise law. Some became
truly great lawyers, many were good lawyers,
and the rest of us had to be content with be-
ing just lawyers. But to the credit of all, and the
great University that certified their fitness to
practise, only one member, so far as John
can find out, ever dishonored the profession.
It is certainly a most remarkable record and
we would not have known it except for the
dogged persistence and patience of John Mof­
fit. I have often wondered if we really knew
the immense amount of time and constant ef­
fort he has given to get the complete history of
the life of every one of us and our families,
quitting only at death. It is simply marvelous
when one knows what John has done for us
and the U. of M.

In conclusion, Mr. President, on behalf of
the members of '86 who are here, we thank
you sincerely for giving us a few minutes of
your precious time to allow us to become bet­
ter acquainted with you and to permit us to
express to you our conviction that under your
guidance the University of Michigan will con­
tinue to be one of America's greatest Univers­
ities.”

Dr. Ruthven, as usual, responded very
graciously. The Class then withdrew and re­
turned to their headquarters. Mr. Haff, at­
tending his first reunion, spoke very feelingly
in reference to Mr. Avery's talk to the Pres­
ident. The Secretary thereupon read the
minutes of the meeting of 1931. These min­
utes summarized the activities from 1926 to
1931, which included a correct roll call show­
ing the members who had attended each of
the reunions. This showed that at the '96 re­
union there were fifteen; at the 1906, 24; in
1911, 20; in 1916, 30; in 1921, 28; in 1926, 36;
and in 1931, 19. The minutes of the 1931
meeting also showed that there were living 54,
deceased, 60 —unknown, 2. The Class then in
a body visited the new Cook Library; found
and looked at the Class Picture and then
called upon Major Bates, the Dean of many
year. The minutes were approved. The
Treasurer's report was read and approved.
The Secretary reported that the Class Pres­
ident, James A. Crawford, had passed away
July 24, 1934. He had been in poor health.
It was reported that he had been improving—
had asked the Secretary to come and see him.
He promised he would. He did not go. You
will remember:
"Around the corner I have a friend, 
In this great city that has no end; 
Yet days go by and weeks rush on, 
And before I know it a year is gone; 
And I never see my old friend's face, 
For life is a swift and terrible race. 
He knows I like him just as well 
As in the days when I rang his bell 
And he rang mine. We were younger then, 
And now we are busy, tired men— 
Tired with playing a foolish game, 
Tired with trying to make a name. 
"Tomorrow", I say, "I will call on Jim 
Just to show that I am thinking of him."
But tomorrow comes, and tomorrow goes, 
The distance between us grows and grows; 
Around the corner, yet miles away— 
"Here's a telegram, sir." "Jim died today." 
And that's what we get and deserve 
in the end; 
Around the corner, a vanished friend."

* * * *

Here are copies of telegrams which will give you all the information I have. I wish I could have written a better appreciation.

Telegram—
Mr. James A. Crawford passed away at ten fifteen tonight. Interment at Indianola, Mississippi, Thursday afternoon.

Telegram—
Am greatly shocked and deeply grieved on receipt of telegram announcing death of my long time friend of fifty years.
Would like to be with you if I could. No train by which can reach you in time for funeral.
Will later wire an appreciation to be read in behalf of his classmates at services.

Telegram—
Hon. James A. Crawford entered the great Law School of the University of Michigan fifty years ago this September. Graduated with the class of Eighteen Hundred Eighty-Six. I was his class mate and life long admirer. His southern breeding and gentle ways made him an outstanding man. He never practiced law. Went back into business for which time has shown he was so greatly gifted. He was the President of his class. Always attended the reunions. It would not have been a reunion without his friendly greetings and kindly acts without number.
Some years ago, he was elected President for life. It was a real honor, but well placed. As in business, he was a great organizer. His class consisted of one hundred sixteen. He had accurate records of each member except two. He is sixty-ninth to pass to the great beyond, leaving only forty-seven surviving. His many, many friends have been much pleased with his high standing in the Alumni Association and among University Authorities. His classmates feel deeply his passing. We will never see his like again.

"I CAN NOT say, and I will not say that he is dead. He is just away! With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand, he has wandered into an unknown land."

And now, good friend, your classmates bid you hail and farewell.

The clock struck 11:00—we all stood; faced the East; bowed our heads, and had a word of prayer in respect to those who had passed on. You may have forgotten about this custom, but some of you who were at the early reunion may recall:

"We adopted a rule that we should all stand for a moment with bowed heads in remembrance of classmates who had passed on.

Finally McKenzie of Atascadero, Cal., who had never attended a reunion, having read in our minutes of this custom, suggested that in order that members of the class, whether present or not, could observe the custom, that 11 o'clock of the first day of the Reunion be the fixed hour. A notice was sent out to all asking each member to pause a moment at this hour.

At our 1921 Reunion, Dr. Butron fixed the hour of our visit to the President at 11 A. M. While presentations were being made the clock started to strike—there was a little embarrassment as to what to do—Crawford as usual, a true gentleman, did the right thing, stopped and told the President of our custom. He joined in with bowed head.

After we got home I wrote a letter of thanks to the President for his courtesy to us. I thought you would be interested in his reply.
"My dear Mr. Moffit:  

Your splendid letter of July 7 was answered by my Assistant under date of July 9. Upon my return from my vacation, I have been going through my mail and I have read with the keenest interest your letter and the attached report. You may be assured that the University of Michigan is very proud of the Law Class of 1886 and you also may be very sure than nothing has touched me more deeply than the beautiful way in which your class paused in my office at eleven o'clock to pay their respects to the memory of the men who can no longer meet with them. It seemed to me like a remarkably beautiful and fine thing and I felt it an honor to be able to have even a slight share in it. I hope that we may all be here to receive you in 1928 when you come back for your next reunion. If, in the meantime, there is any service which we can render to you, please do not fail to command us.

Believe me, 

Very sincerely yours,  

M. L. BURTON"

The Secretary reported deaths since 1931 reunion:—

Deaths before Directory of 1931 but not reported to Secretary in time for that Directory:

Blakeley died Feb. 5, 1931  
Briggs died July 21, 1930

Deaths since Reunion of 1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Died</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Browning</td>
<td>Feb. 11, 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunson</td>
<td>Dec. 22, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>July 24, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrar</td>
<td>June 30, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallup</td>
<td>May 4, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydick</td>
<td>April 23, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason, W. L.</td>
<td>Jan. 15, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeil</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overton</td>
<td>Aug. 1, 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickens</td>
<td>Jan. 9, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>July 26, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Oct. 25, 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, B. S.</td>
<td>Jan. 25, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spears</td>
<td>Aug. 24, 1932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 14
1932 —
Brunson; Mason, W. L.; McNeil; Smith, B. S.; Spears.

1934 —
Crawford; Farrar; Pickens; Richardson.

1935 —
Browning; Overton; Shepherd.

1936 —
Gallup; Lydick.

June 12, 1936 —
Living 38; Deceased 76; Unaccounted For 2—Total 116.

LUNCHEON

The Secretary could not attend the luncheon.

You may recall that in 1927 the President of the University called a meeting of the representatives of the different classes and organized what is known as "The Class Officers' Council," the object being to use the class officers to assist in Alumni work. You directed the Secretary to attend the meeting. He has been quite active in the work ever since and at a meeting at which he was not present, was elected Honorary Chairman for life.

At 2:30, met again. The whole afternoon was spent in listening to the reading of letters and the telling of many reminiscences of the different members.

At the morning meeting with the President it was noted that he said an Honorary Degree of Master of Law was to be conferred on the Secretary at the Commencement exercises. The Secretary must have been selected for this honor by some such plan as they have bank nights in the moving pictures—he was just lucky that his name was drawn. The Class, however, expressed great pleasure and satisfaction in having this honor come to their Class, and the President. Mr. Avery was directed to write the President on his return home. He wrote the following letter:

THE LAWYERS CLUB
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven
President of University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dear Mr. President:
The members of the class graduated in
the year 1886 from the Department of Law of the University of Michigan, having been informed by you of the signal honor voted by the Regents and members of the University faculty, to be conferred, by your recommendation, upon the Honorable John T. Moffit, the faithful and efficient secretary of their class for half a century, by granting to him the academic degree of Master of Laws, in recognition of his attainments as a lawyer and judge, and of his services as a devoted alumnus of the University; and also being duly sensible of the patriotism and loyalty of their class-mate and of the honor reflected upon his class by this act of the University, have, by unanimous resolution, instructed the undersigned president of the law class of 1886 to present the thanks and appreciation of the members of the class to you and, through you, to the governing body of the University for this deserved mark of distinction given to their class-mate.

Please accept, Mr. President our deep consideration and respect.

Very sincerely yours,

Law Class of 1886 of the University of Michigan,

By, Lincoln Avery, President

Ann Arbor, Michigan
June 20, 1936.

Dinner together—then the whole evening was spent visiting,—chairs being placed in a circle. The visiting would probably have continued until this time had it not been that the rules of the House provide that lights are out at 11.

Saturday, June 20th, 1936.

The Class met informally—spent the forenoon walking about the Campus and visiting—pictures taken. Were guests at the Alumni luncheon. At the close of the luncheon they were inducted into The Emeritus Club. That is a comparatively new organization of the University which includes all members who have been out of school for 50 years. The
President presents a beautiful gold pin as an evidence of your membership. Hereafter, when we meet, we will meet with the Emeritus Club, or at least, a section of it. The University makes much of this Club. A committee of the faculty and of the University Club is designated to look after the members. They are all quartered in one house. Our next reunion, in 1941, will adopt this plan and be quartered with the Club—probably in the Helen Newberry House.

Officers were elected:

President—Lincoln Avery.
Vice Presidents—Lt. Governor J. B. Gill, Judge K. S. Searl.
Secretary-Treasurer—John T. Moffit held over under previous life election.
Assistant Sec'y-Treas.—J. W. Houder.

The Class passed a resolution of appreciation for the manner in which the records were kept. It recited that the records were up to date—no guesswork. The final check showed at this date that 76 had passed on,—38 were living, and two unaccounted for. One of these we are positive was murdered,—the other a fugitive from justice.

At four p.m. the final goodbyes were said and we separated to the four winds. The Secretary appreciates that there are many, many oversights in the foregoing minutes, and many things should have been included, and many things referring to the Secretary should have been left out,—but the various personal matters were designated by the Class to be put in the minutes for the purpose of keeping the records complete.
Members have attended the different reunions as follows:

Aldrich—1906, 1911, 1916, 1921, 1926.
Andrews—1906.
Bannon—1926, 1931.
Boyd—1916, 1921, 1926.
Clary—1921.
Creveling—1911.
Doe—1926.
Dresbach—1921, 1926, 1931.
Dudley—1916, 1926.
Edgerton—1906.
Evans—1916, 1921.
Farrar—1926, 1931.
Gardner—1921, 1926, 1931.
Garrigues—1921, 1926.
Gilbert—1936.
Gill—1926, 1936.
Haff—1936.
Helmick—1921.
Hogg—1906, 1916.
Hooper—1916, 1926.
Humphrey—1921.
Huntsberger—1896, 1911, 1921.
Kline—1896.
Kraus—1911, 1916, 1926.
Lamison—1906.
Mason, W. L.—1906.
May, W. A. F.—1921, 1926.
Meeker—1906, 1921, 1931, 1936.
Miller, E. C. — 1926.
Miller, Volney — 1916, 1921, 1926, 1931, 1936.
Munn — 1926.
McMillen — 1906, 1916, 1921, 1926.
McNamara — 1896, 1911, 1916.
Pickens — 1926.
Prewitt — 1916.
Richter — 1926.
Scouton — 1926.
Servis — 1896.
Smith, Jas. G. — 1931.

Most respectfully submitted,

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JOHN T. MOFFIT, Secretary