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Elias Finley Johnson

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ELIAS FINLEY JOHNSON.

The department at Washington has again honored the University of Michigan by drafting from its faculty a member for important and responsible service in our new possessions. Professor Johnson of the Law Department has been appointed one of the Supreme Judges of the Philippine Islands, at



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a salary of \$5,500. The expenses of himself and family to Manila are to be paid by the Government, and he will certainly be provided with such clerical assistance as the duties of the office call for.

The Supreme Court which is to be formed for the Islands is to consist of five supreme judges, three of whom are to be sent from this country and two selected from prominent jurists in the Islands. It will be the duty of this court, when organized, to administer justice throughout the islands under such regulations as may be provided and to develop a system of jurisprudence suited to the existing conditions of the far east. To a young man, well qualified, this is an enviable task, a great opportunity. Professor Johnson is to be congratulated and the Administration at Washington may rest assured that he will render a good account of himself.

Mr. Johnson was born at Van Wert, Ohio, on June 24, 1861. At the age of 19 he received the degree of Bachelor of Science from the National Normal University of Ohio. His environments directed his further study toward the science of jurisprudence. His childhood was spent in a family of lawyers of high degree. His father was a judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Ohio. His uncle on his father's side was for many years the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the same state, and his uncle on his mother's side, Judge West, was a member of the same court. We can, now, easily understand Mr. Johnson's devotion to the law as a science.

But the young man was a politician as well as a lawyer. At the age of twenty-two he was a member of the legislature of the State of Ohio, and there formed associations that have been invaluable to him during the past twenty years. Mr. Johnson has been a very active man in public affairs. This has made him some enemies, but a man without enemies is not worthy of friends.

In 1884 Mr. Johnson married Miss Clara A. Smith of Van Wert, Ohio, and in a few years afterwards the young couple left their native state and came to the University of Michigan. They came to finish his legal education. He had already practiced law for several years, but was not satisfied with his knowledge of the subject. In the fall of 1888 he entered the Law Department of the University of Michigan, took the full course, then required, and was graduated in June, 1890. This was the beginning of his work at the University and from then until today his work among us as a student or teacher has continued, without interruption. During his senior year he was asked to assist Professor Rogers in class room work, and in the fall of 1890 he was made quiz-master. In 1891 he became a regular instructor in the department. In 1892 he was chosen secretary of the law faculty and in 1896 he was elected Professor of Law by the Board of Regents of the University and given the title of "Professor of Law and Secretary of the Faculty of the Department of Law." These positions he now fills. This record alone shows a continuous healthful growth for a period of over ten years, and suggests

that the man's life has not been uneventful or unprofitable to himself or those with whom he came in contact.

As a teacher, Professor Johnson possesses some rare qualifications. He is faithful to his work and never shirks responsibility. With students he is always considerate and very tactful. His personal interest in the individual student accounts very largely for his popularity among them. During the past few days he has received over three hundred congratulatory letters from alumni of the Law Department.

As Secretary of the Law Faculty his labors have been quite heavy, during the past two years, but the promptitude and patience with which he has performed them have won the admiration and respect of his associates. He has a place for everything and everything in its place.

Professor Johnson has given considerable of his time to literary work. He has written many articles for legal periodicals and edited several books. In 1895 he edited Norton's Bills and Notes. In 1896 he edited Bliss on Code Pleading and in 1897 he wrote "Johnson's Cases on Bills and Notes," which is now used as a text-book in many law schools.

The alumni of the University will not forget Professor Johnson's services as a member of the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan. He is now vice-president of that board, and has been for several years. Some of its most important interests have been placed in his hands and have been faithfully cared for. He has been a member of the board since its organization.

While Professor Johnson has performed most satisfactorily all his University work, he has not overlooked his obligations to others. He is now President of the Board of Education of the State of Michigan. During the past four years, he has been a member of this board and for a part of the time has been treasurer of the board. He has devoted much thought to the Normal School at Ypsilanti, this being under the immediate control of the State Board of Education. We are informed that under his management and supervision, as President and Treasurer of the board, the finances of the Normal College and its business methods are in better condition than they have been before in the history of the institution. The other members of the board will miss him and feel the loss of his wise counsel.

Professor Johnson is a Christian gentleman. He is a member of the board of trustees of the Methodist Church of the city of Ann Arbor. At all times he has been willing and ready to help those who were interested in social and religious advancement. His intense interest in his educational work and in public affairs has not made him unmindful of his religious and social obligations. If Professor Johnson accepts the position tendered him, he will create a large vacuum in the community in which he has lived during the past ten years. Who will try to fill it?

J. C. Knowlton, '75.