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## Paul A. Leidy

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*This issue is dedicated to the memory of Paul A. Leidy*

**PAUL A. LEIDY**

*Memorial Resolution by University of Michigan*

*Law Faculty Concerning Paul A. Leidy*

**P**AUL A. LEIDY, Professor Emeritus of the Law School, died on July 20, 1970, at the ripe age of eighty-one years. His death marked the passing of a man who had devoted himself with singular dedication and loyalty to the Law School and who by his work as teacher and administrator had earned the respect and affection of many generations of law students.

Paul Leidy was born September 5, 1888, in Detroit. His family thereafter moved to Toledo, Ohio, where Paul attended the public schools. Upon graduation from high school, he enrolled at the University of Michigan, spent one year in the Engineering College, then transferred to the College of Literature, Science and the Arts which awarded him the A.B. degree in 1909.

During the following thirteen years he pursued a varied career which gave him an unusual range and depth of experience prior to his study of the law. After teaching mathematics one year in the Sheboygan (Wisconsin) High School, he returned to the University as a Fellow in Political Economy and upon completion of his graduate studies received the Master's degree in 1911.

At that point Paul embarked upon a substantial business career. He was Assistant Secretary of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce in 1912 and Secretary of the Jackson (Michigan) Chamber from 1913 to 1915. Thereafter he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Michigan Drop Forge Company of Pontiac, Michigan, from 1916 to 1922. Upon the completion of that period of service he began his career in the law.

Paul Leidy entered the University of Michigan Law School and received the J.D. degree in 1924. His outstanding record as a law student made clear that he had not made a mistake in forsaking business for the law. He was elected to the student board of the *Michigan Law Review* and to the Order of the Coif. He contributed four comments as a student editor to Volume 22 of the *Michigan Law Review* and was awarded the Howard B. Coblentz Prize for the outstanding excellence of his contributions to the *Review*.

After two years of practice of law with Miller, Brady, Yeager and Leidy in Toledo, Paul was invited to come back to the Law School in order to accept a position as Professor of Law and Secretary of the Law School. This marked the beginning of a fruitful and distinguished career as teacher and administrator which continued until 1951 and was interrupted only by the leave he took during World War II in order to serve as a member of the Law Department of the Quaker Oats Company. While making his contribution as a teacher, he served as Secretary of the Law School from 1926 to 1943 and then with the formal initiation of the Law School Placement Service he became the first Law School Placement Director in 1945, a post which he held until his retirement. Upon his retirement in 1951 after twenty-five years of service to the Law School, he was named Professor Emeritus of Law by action of the Board of Regents.

While the Law School was his central interest, he gave his time and energy generously also to other causes. He was active in the affairs of the Michigan Bar Association, served as a Director of the Ann Arbor Community Fund, was a long-time member of the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor and of the Ann Arbor Rotary Club, served for many years on the Michigan Union's Finance Committee and was the Union's Financial Secretary for five years, and was also for many years a member of the Board of Directors of the National Bank and Trust Company of Ann Arbor.

Paul was an ardent sports fan. In earlier years he had been a sports writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Detroit Free Press* and *Toledo Blade*. In his undergraduate days at the University of Michigan he was a member of the Varsity Tennis Team. His continuing interest in athletics and particularly in Michigan athletics found expression in the activities of the M Club which he twice served as President.

Paul Leidy made his major contributions at the Law School as a teacher and administrator. He liked to teach, and his major teaching interests were Torts and Agency. Eventually he concentrated his attention on the Torts course, where he enjoyed his classroom en-

counters with first-year students. Many generations of law students will recall him as an effective, lively and stimulating teacher who added zest to that course. Rarely seated while teaching, he most frequently stood at the desk or paced the platform or developed some ideas on the blackboard, while at the same time continuing an animated discussion with the students. Skilled in the Socratic method, his teaching evoked a spirited response that made his classroom a particularly fruitful and memorable experience for the students. Students long remembered his highly mobile and expressive face and his sharp pursuit of an argument, punctuated by quips of humor. Paul Leidy was not tolerant of poor preparation by students and took the opportunity in his first-year classes to admonish the students who, he felt, were not making adequate preparation. He set a high standard for himself and was impatient with students who were not putting forth their best.

A combination of teaching and administrative duties left relatively little time for intensive research and writing. Yet it is remarkable that while engrossed with teaching and administrative responsibilities, he was able, nevertheless, to undertake some scholarly tasks and to make some distinctive contributions to the law. His articles in the *Michigan Law Review*, dealing with such subjects as malpractice of physicians, the status of salesmen as independent contractors, and the liability of manufacturers for nonnegligent defects all evidenced a keen awareness of current legal developments. A reading of these articles impresses one again with the ease of his writing, the sharpness of his analysis and his good judgment in dealing with legal problems. They suggest also that Paul Leidy would have distinguished himself as a productive legal scholar if he had not been burdened with time-absorbing administrative duties. Indeed, at the time Paul retired he turned over to his junior colleague, Professor Marcus Plant, manuscripts and supporting notes which evidenced extensive and careful research and writing and which Professor Plant thought worthy of publication but which Paul, with characteristic modesty, had thought were not good enough to be published. The same modesty led him to refuse opportunities for commercial publication of his Torts Casebook which he designed particularly for use of the students in his classes and which went through three successive editions before Marcus Plant joined Paul as co-editor of the next edition.

While his teaching of the first-year Torts course helped to account for the very wide acquaintance and high respect he enjoyed among the graduates of the Law School, his administrative work per-

haps contributed even more. His duties as Secretary of the Law School included responsibility for admissions, disciplinary matters, and questions relating to financial assistance. With the later growth of the Law School these functions have been assumed by separate offices. Despite the burden of his tasks and the demands they made on his time and effort, Paul Leidy was always available to students at any hour of the day and was never too busy to hear a student and to give consideration to his problems. Although he expected students to measure up to a high standard of work and personal conduct, he dealt fairly and justly with the erring student. Above all, he was a kind, compassionate, sensitive, and generous person, and many law school alumni remember with gratitude his concern for their interests and the help he extended to them. During the dark depression days, when students' needs were often acute and Law School funds for student assistance were highly limited, it was not unusual for Paul Leidy to dig into his pocket and draw upon his own resources to help meet a critical need that enabled a student to continue his legal education.

Apart from his responsibilities in dealing with students, Paul Leidy, as Secretary of the Law School, performed a number of other tasks which included such matters as keeping the faculty minutes and other official records, preparing the class schedules, and otherwise helping to maintain the operations of the Law School. All this required an enormous expenditure of effort. Yet he discharged these duties faithfully and cheerfully as an expression of his unflinching loyalty and dedication to the Law School. His remark to a friend that the Law School was his hobby reflected the joy and satisfaction he found in serving the School. "Mister Law School" was a title which would well have fitted him.

With the creation of the Placement Office and the assumption of his duties as the first Placement Director, Paul Leidy began another administrative career at the Law School, one which he again filled with distinction. He faced the task originally of organizing the placement efforts which meant corresponding with many law firms and also organizing the various means of establishing contact between prospective employers and students. Since his day the Placement Service has assumed a large role in the operation of the Law School; to Paul Leidy can be credited much of the original planning that led to this result. The same devotion to the school and the concern for its students that had distinguished his efforts as teacher and Secretary led him to give enthusiastic and whole-hearted attention

to the task of placing the students and providing opportunities for them. He found this work intensely absorbing and deeply satisfying, made this position a highly personal enterprise, and wherever he traveled, whether on vacation or otherwise, he did not miss any opportunity to establish or strengthen contacts with law firms in order to maximize the reach and benefits of the Placement Service. This extraordinary commitment of time and effort bore its fruit, and among the many alumni of the Law School there are those who will remember him as the one who was directly instrumental in placing them in their present positions.

Paul Leidy's interest as a citizen extended to all phases of public life, and he took a very keen interest in political developments. Conservative in his political and economic philosophy, he became one of the faculty's leading critics of the New Deal program. His colleagues will recall Paul's lively participation in the debates at the faculty luncheons. As in all things Paul Leidy threw himself into his arguments with earnestness and feeling, and never failed to articulate his position with skill and strength. Those who disagreed with him knew where Paul stood and respected the honesty and integrity which informed his arguments. Fortunately also, Paul was endowed with a rich sense of humor which sparked his arguments and helped relieve the sting. When the heat of battle was over, he could indulge in humor at his own expense. Asked what he planned to do on retirement, he remarked that he was free to give more time to his favorite occupation of "viewing with alarm."

Paul Leidy was a family man. Family and home were the sources of deep satisfaction and contentment in his life. He married Kathryn Breymann in 1915, and with her shared fifty-five years of a singularly happy and rewarding wedded life. Many friends shared the joy of the golden wedding anniversary reception in 1965. During the years that followed his retirement, Paul and his wife continued to reside in Ann Arbor. But Paul was not one to sit idly by and suffer boredom. He assisted his son John in the operation of his gift shop, enjoyed his old friends, including law alumni who returned to Ann Arbor and made it a point to visit him, continued his interest in public affairs, enlivened the meetings of the Rotary Club with his genial humor, and enjoyed the rich amenities of a warm family circle. Colleagues who saw him frequently on the streets in the campus area observed the same brisk walk and alert response which characterized his earlier days. Indeed, the years passed lightly over him, and except for failing eyesight, his physical condition continued

remarkably good and the vigor of his intellectual powers remained unimpaired. Death came suddenly and quietly a few days after he entered the hospital for rest and treatment.

We, the Faculty of the University of Michigan Law School, join in extending our earnest sympathy to the surviving wife Kathryn, the son John, the daughter Barbara, and the grandchildren, in expressing our own sorrow over the passing of a colleague whose character, dedication and achievements we respected and honored, and in voicing our gratitude for the contributions Paul Leidy made to the Law School, the legal profession, and the law.