

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### JAMES E. BRENNER (1889 – 1963)

Professor James E. Brenner had careers in two widely separated fields—the navy and the law.

He entered the United States Naval Academy in 1909, graduating in 1913 with the degree of Bachelor of Science. There followed a period of active naval duty. During World War I he served as an engineering officer on convoy duty in the Atlantic. Following the war he did postgraduate study at the Naval Academy and also at Columbia University. While on duty in the tropics he fell victim to an illness that led to his retirement in 1921 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. However, he was recalled to active duty in 1941 and served until he returned to the inactive retired list in 1946 with the rank of Captain.

In 1924 he entered the Stanford Law School and graduated in 1927 with the degree of Juris Doctor. The Law Faculty then successfully sought his aid in organizing the law library, which he quickly put into good operating condition and which he continued to supervise for twenty years. His unusual administrative capacity became plainly apparent to the faculty. It was not long before others recognized it too and sought the benefit of his help. In 1929 the newly formed State Bar of California asked him to take a position as Executive Secretary in order to organize its work on an efficient basis. He was given a year's leave of absence from Stanford and in that time accomplished the task with great success. While he returned to the University at the end of the year, he continued to serve on a part-time basis with the State Bar for many years as Research Secretary. His work was largely with the Committee of Bar Examiners. He developed a statistical service relating to all aspects of the admission process, a service which made the state outstanding in this respect. In addition, he fought strenuously for higher standards for admission to practice. He was instrumental in establishing the Committee on Co-operation Between the State Bar and the Law Schools, and for a dozen years or so he kept it functioning actively by bringing before it a steady stream of problems relating to admission to practice. This committee, which included members of the Committee of Bar Examiners, practicing attorneys not members of that committee, judges and law school deans and teachers, was an effective agency largely because Professor Brenner served as its "spark plug." This interest in problems of admission brought to his attention the paucity of data on admission practices in the country as a whole. With characteristic energy he set about the difficult task of collecting the necessary information and published the results of his study under the title Survey of Bar Examination Procedure, 1930-31. The study was the first national survey of this character, He also became a leader in organizing the National Conference of Bar Examiners ' a group which, for twenty-five years has been active in improving admission procedures, From 1930 to 1949 Professor Brenner was Secretary of the Conference.

Soon his interests began to include the American Bar Association. He became a member of its Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar in 1932 and served for eight years. Here again his championship of higher educational standards for lawyers was continuously and forcibly expressed. In view of his long experience in dealing with admission problems it was only natural that when, following World War II, the national Survey of the Legal Profession was

undertaken Professor Brenner should become a member of its directing Council and Consultant on Admission to the Bar. His report in the latter capacity appears in a volume published in 1952 under the title Bar Examinations and Requirements for Admission to the Bar.

Professor Brenner held the view that legal education should be a continuing process—that the lawyer's education should not cease upon admission to practice. So we find him active in the movement, finally undertaken by the American Law Institute, to provide continuing education for lawyers on professional problems through symposia, conferences, lectures and other means. For many years he was Director of the Western Area of this project. He was also Chairman of the California State Bar committee in charge of continuing education for members of the Bar. Today the program is an established professional activity throughout the country.

Besides performing the professional services sketched above, Professor Brenner found time to help the Bar in other ways too numerous to discuss in detail. Some idea of the scope of his interests may be gained merely by noting the fact that he served on committees of the Association of American Law Schools and the Association of American Law Libraries and was a member of the Board of Editors of the American Bar Association Journal and of the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal of Legal Education.

The reader may wonder how anyone could devote the necessary time to such professional work and have any left for Stanford Law School. Yet Professor Brenner carried a full-time load of work in the School. That he organized and directed the law library has been mentioned. In addition, he conceived and put into operation the idea of a course in law office practice, a course which practicing attorneys, judges, bankers, trust officers, title men, etc., assisted in conducting. He taught the first course in labor law and directed the first work in legal writing given at Stanford. On occasions he taught Contracts, Conveyances and Equity. As an adjunct to his library work he gave instruction over a long period in Legal Bibliography. By virtue of this work he became Associate Professor and finally, in 1936, Professor of Law. But his flair for administration naturally resulted in his being constantly called upon for service of this type. Following his return to Stanford after his service with the U.S. Navy during World War II and until his retirement, he developed and directed both the placement service and the Stanford Law School Fund. Even after retirement he continued to work for the Law School in many ways, particularly in connection with its fundraising activities.

How were all of these things accomplished by one person? The answer to this question is a picture of the man. He had tremendous energy and was indefatigable in effort. To him there was no such thing as an eight-hour day or a five-day week. A vacation was not a time for rest and recreation but an opportunity to catch up with accumulated work and to plan more for the future. He was always willing to assume another task—a trait which led to imposition upon him both by the School and by professional groups. He was fertile with ideas relating both to the ultimate objects to be attained and to the method of achieving them. Those who have worked with him will testify to the relentless way in which he besieged them with suggestions and ideas. Along with all these traits went personal warmth and friendliness and a generous hospitality which evoked hearty co-operation from his fellow workmen. Few men are blessed with such a host of personal and professional friends all over the country. All found it a pleasure to work with him—and work is just what they did.

From the point of view of the Law School, Professor Brenner's work with the profession bore fine fruit. He carried the name of Stanford to the uttermost part of the nation. His well deserved reputation for fine ideas, great skill, and effectiveness in getting results redounded to the benefit of the School. The same may be said of his relations with Stanford lawyers. Contact with him not only stimulated their professional consciences but rearoused their interest and affection for their Law School.

Professor Brenner performed many tasks during his many years at Stanford. All who knew him will agree that he performed them with distinction.

John B. Hurlbut  
Moffatt Hancock  
John R. McDonough, Jr.