

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

GEORGE EDWARD OSBORNE (1893 – 1977)

George E. Osborne came to the Stanford School of Law in 1923 and was a leading and influential member of the faculty for 35 years, the last five as William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law. His talent for and dedication to the art of teaching have been fittingly memorialized through the efforts of the Law Class of 1958 by the classroom named in his honor in the new Stanford Law School buildings. The George Osborne Student Loan Fund, to which he contributed for the emergency needs of law students, testifies to the continuous concern he felt for his students.

Born in Colorado, George Osborne later moved to Los Angeles, graduating from Los Angeles High School. His undergraduate degree was earned at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1916. He was awarded the honorary LL.D. degree by his alma mater in 1966.

Professor Osborne spent four years at Harvard Law School, serving as President of the Harvard Law Review during his third year and receiving his LL.B. degree in 1919. After obtaining his S.J.D. from Harvard in 1920, he taught for one year at the University of West Virginia Law School and started their law review. He visited at Stanford in the summer of 1921 and spent the next two years teaching at the University of Minnesota Law School, after which he became Professor of Law at Stanford.

While he remained at Stanford from 1923 to 1958, at various times he visited at the University of California, Berkeley, and at Chicago, Colorado, Columbia, Duke, and Washington.

The recognized United States authority on the law of Mortgages and Suretyship, Professor Osborne was a noted author of books in those fields as well as a writer of numerous articles in legal publications. During World War II he was a Mediator and Public Panel Member for the National War Labor Board and served as Chairman of several Industry Commissions to set minimum wages. President Truman appointed him in 1949 to be a member of the President's Railway Emergency Board in the Engineers' and Firemen's Diesel Manpower Cases and, in 1951-52, to a similar Presidential Board in the Non-Operating Unions' Union Shop Case.

He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Order of the Coif, Phi Delta Phi, Bohemian Club, Palo Alto Club, Stanford Faculty Club, Berkeley Faculty Club, Commonwealth Club, and the Menlo Country Club.

He is survived by a niece, Dr. Louisa Howe, of the Harvard Medical School faculty, her three children and her two grandchildren.

When Professor Osborne retired from Stanford in 1958, he joined the faculty of the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, continuing to teach his specialties until he became Emeritus from Hastings in 1975. In his honor at Hastings there is the George E. Osborne Distinguished Visiting Professorship and the Osborne Perpetual Rugby Cup.

Professor Osborne's major field of scholarly interest was Security Transactions. His several casebooks were highly regarded and widely used, and he contributed a major volume to the American Law of Property. His leading work, however, is his text on Mortgages. The book's durability is unique. First published in 1951, with a second edition in 1970, it remains the dominant book in the field, combining legal theory and a comprehensive understanding of the practices and realities of business life.

A legendary first-year teacher, Professor Osborne was a model of intellectual and moral sinew. His former students often recount a litany of the sound, volume, and timbre of his voice, the question put to a particular student--a person theretofore of perfect peace--the grasping, trusting-to-luck reply, and the manner in which the teacher made known his inability to follow. An Osborne class was a seat of learning, a place where work was required, accomplishment encouraged, and excellence rewarded. The nostalgic remembrance of pyrotechnic display reveals the deep fulfillment that may come about when reciprocal challenge, talent, and effort combine to produce educational growth and training for responsible professionalism. His students were a major concern of Professor Osborne's life, their achievements a fundamental source of his pride, and their contributions his permanent legacy.

On May 25, 1977, a memorial service was held in Memorial Church for George E. Osborne, William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law, Emeritus. Tributes were delivered by his former faculty colleague, Moffatt Hancock, Marion Rice Kirkwood Professor of Law, Emeritus, Stanford University, and Professor, Hastings College of the Law; and by two former students, James D. Cox, Associate Professor, Hastings; and William T. Keogh, Associate Dean, Stanford Law School. Charles J. Meyers, Richard E. Lang Professor of Law and Dean, School of Law, presided.

J. Keith Mann, Chairman
John B. Hurlbut
Gordon K. Scott