

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

WALTER THOMPSON (1889 – 1940)

The death of Walter Thompson, Professor of Political Science, on October 7, 1940, brought an abrupt termination to the work of an outstanding teacher in the field of political theory.

Professor Thompson was born in McPherson, Kansas, in 1889 and received his bachelor's degree at McPherson College in 1912. He obtained his master's degree at the University of Kansas the following year, where he held a fellowship in sociology. After further graduate work at the Universities of Wisconsin and Chicago, he enlisted in the Marine Corps for the period of the war and served overseas. Before returning to the United States he attended the Sorbonne, and upon his return he was given an assistantship in the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin. Obtaining his doctorate in 1921, he remained as instructor in the department for the next two years. It was while at the University of Wisconsin that Dr. Thompson wrote his scholarly volume entitled Federal Centralization, which was one of the pioneer studies in this field and is still invaluable to the student of federal administration. In 1923 Dr. Thompson became assistant superintendent of Schools at Hibbing, Minnesota, but administrative work did not satisfy him, and two years later he accepted the professorship of government at the University of Oklahoma. From the University of Oklahoma he came to Stanford in 1928 and remained here until his death.

In 1931 Professor Thompson was made Carnegie Visiting Professor to Sweden and Norway where he lectured in Swedish at the University of Upsala, Sweden, and Kongelige Frederiks Universitet, Oslo, Norway. While in Sweden Professor Thompson became interested in the remarkably effective system of liquor control in operation there as contrasted with prohibition enforcement in the United States. He made a careful study of it and upon his return published a volume entitled The Control of Liquor in Sweden which is a model of careful investigation and clear exposition. In 1937 Dr. Thompson was awarded the LL.D. degree by McPherson College.

While lecturing in Sweden Professor Thompson also became keenly interested in the cooperative movement and later he helped organize the Palo Alto Consumers Cooperative Society and served as president of its board of directors.

In the death of Professor Thompson the University has lost an able teacher and a scholarly research worker, and his colleagues and students an associate whose unique and kindly personality will be treasured permanently.

Be it resolved by the Academic Council that this recognition be incorporated in the minutes and a copy forwarded to Mrs. Thompson with an expression of the sympathy of the Council.

Graham Stuart
Edwin A. Cottrell
Charles N. Reynolds