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Leon Wallace (1951-1952 Acting; 1952-1966)

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Leon Wallace Profile

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P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.

Leon H. Wallace

As dean of the Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington, Terre Haute native Leon H. Wallace supervised the design and construction of one of the nation's most modern legal education facilities.



The son of Harry S. and Leona A. (Wagoner) Wallace, Leon was born at 1316 N. Seventh St. on Jan. 24, 1904. He attended Harrison School before matriculating to Garfield High School, where he graduated in 1921. For two years he attended the University of Illinois but, in 1923, transferred to Indiana University. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1925 and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the academic honorary. In the same year, he wed Anna Ruth Haworth. For the ensuing four years, Wallace was production manager for Rand-McNally Company in San Francisco. In 1930, however, he returned to Bloomington to enroll at IU Law School. Upon being awarded a doctor of jurisprudence degree in 1933, he joined his father and Clyde R. Randel in the law firm of Wallace, Randel & Wallace with offices in the Tune building. The Wallace family resided at 116 Van Buren Blvd., where they raised daughters Susan and Leona and son Harry.

In 1945 Wallace was asked to serve as a full professor on the IU Law School faculty. He accepted, retaining for several years his corporate duties with Coldwell & Co., a Terre Haute firm he helped organize. When Bernard Gavit was forced to resign as dean in 1952 due to failing health, Wallace was chosen to succeed him. At the time of his appointment the law school was enjoying unprecedented growth and Maxwell Hall, home of the law school since 1907, could not handle many worthy applicants. Dean Wallace was placed in charge of designing a modern building. Construction began on a \$1.6 million structure in early 1955. It was ready for occupancy in autumn of 1956. The gala dedication was attended by scores of legal dignitaries, including U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, the main speaker. In 1958, Garfield High School named Dean Wallace the recipient of its tenth annual Distinguished Alumnus Award.

In 1966, at age 62, Wallace resigned as dean to return to teaching, confident that the stature of the School of Law had been vitalized during his tenure. Succeeded by Dean W. Burnett Harvey, Wallace remained on the faculty until 1976. Between 1951 and 1976, Wallace served as secretary-treasurer of the Indiana State Bar Association Foundation. Upon his retirement, he was given the honorary title, "secretary emeritus." Among his many significant memberships and contributions, Wallace was a founder of the Foundation of the Federal Bar Association and national president of Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity.

Dean Wallace died in Bloomington on Nov. 19, 1985, at age 81. Since 1986, the Leon H. Wallace Teaching Award is given to an outstanding member of the IU Law School faculty.



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