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Edward J. Moss

Daily Herald

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Maurer School of Law
Bloomington



LEON H. WALLACE

Wallace, driving force in IU law school, retiring

By EDWARD J. MOSS
Of The IU News Bureau

Being named dean of Indiana University's two law schools after only six years of full-time teaching and one year as acting dean was not a job Leon H. Wallace sought back in 1952. To use his own words, "it was more or less fortuitous."

He's right. It was lucky for the University. Wallace, who graduated from the IU School of Law in Bloomington in 1933 with the highest three-year grade average in his class, went on to become, literally, a driving force in the school.

Now retiring after serving the past eight years as Charles McGuffey Hepburn Professor of Law here, Wallace is not about to take to the family

heirloom rocking chair in his office. He will have plenty of legal work and research to keep him busy.

Although one of the highest ranking students in the history of the school, Wallace chose to go to Terre Haute and join a leading law firm there rather than stay here and teach. Four years later, he was commuting to the IU campus here to teach three and sometimes four classes during the day he spent on campus.

At that time, neither the roads nor the automobiles were designed for the fast pace of life today. Sometimes the highway between Terre Haute and Bloomington would be flooded and he would have to travel by way of Indianapolis. This

meant getting up at 4 a.m.

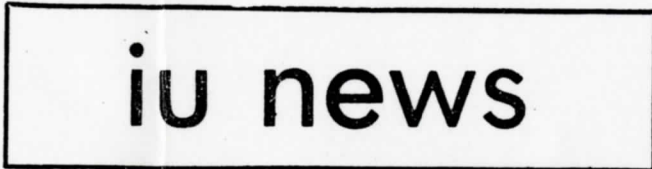
Wallace followed this part-time schedule for two years and then took a hiatus until 1945 when he came to IU on a full-time basis. This is where he really had to drive himself to get all his work done.

At that time the law school on the IU Indianapolis campus was an evening operation. For 15 years he spent an average of two days a week at the Indianapolis campus. When the associate dean there retired, he split his time (for about four

months) between Bloomington and Indianapolis, which made a six-day work week for him.

While he was dean the Law School here gained national stature as one of the 10 largest law schools in the country. But size of the school is not the main criteria in turning out good law school graduates. Wallace listed what he thinks are some admirable attributes in a lawyer:

"A lawyer should be more than just a technician. He should be something of an



economist and a sociologist. I don't mean he should be an expert in those fields, but he should be able to go to experts and know the questions to ask them and what knowledge he wants to get from them.

"I think one of the greatest attributes a lawyer can have is the ability to communicate precisely and simply so that people understand him or her. One thing that appalls me is some of the examinations I get back from students who are finishing seven years of college, and they're almost illiterate. They can't write a coherent paragraph. Some of them can't write a coherent sentence."

Wallace believes part of the responsibility goes back to

grade school where students get their grounding in grammar. He told of a valuable aid he picked up in high school, not entirely by his own choice.

"One of the greatest assets I have is four years of high school Latin. You hate it when you're going through it, but it has served me well. It has given me a much better vocabulary."

There is no "best" background for preparing for law studies, according to Wallace. He cited English, English literature, physics, chemistry, medicine, electrical engineering, and forestry as some of the majors held by law students at IU. There is also a

joint master's degree program operated in conjunction with the IU School of Business in which students earn the Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Business Administration M.B.A.).

Not all students are so ambitious. Indeed, some have come to the Law School believing in the Perry Mason (popular television lawyer) style of law practice. When these students found there is a lot of work in getting a law degree, they became disillusioned, and some dropped out of school, Wallace said.

Wallace doesn't plan to drop out of sight now that his teaching duties are ending. He has managed to become quite visible in the state while performing other duties that often fall on the shoulders of dedicated scholars.

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