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Willard L. Eckhardt

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WILLARD L. ECKHARDT

The Missouri Law Review is honored to dedicate this issue to Willard L. Eckhardt, who is the Earl F. Nelson and Laurance M. Hyde Professor of Law. He will retire at the end of the 1981-1982 school year.

Willard L. Eckhardt was born in May 23, 1912, at Urbana, Illinois. He attended grade school and high school in DeKalb, Illinois, and graduated first in the DeKalb Township High School class of 1929. Because his father thought everyone should work between high school and college, Mr. Eckhardt worked for two years for his father in the seed corn business. He then worked his way through college and law school in six years, taking his pre-law in the College of Commerce at the University of Illinois in a combined degree program that allowed dual enrollment in the College of Law.

Mr. Eckhardt received his J.D. with Honors from the University of Illinois in 1937. While in law school, he served as student editor and case editor of the Illinois Bar Journal, which published five of his student articles. In addition, Mr. Eckhardt ranked first in his graduating class and was a member of the Order of the Coif, Phi Alpha Delta, Beta Gamma Sigma, and Phi Kappa Phi.

Following his graduation from law school, Mr. Eckhardt was a Sterling Fellow at the Yale University School of Law in 1937-1938. In 1938, he was appointed Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Missouri School of Law.

In 1942, Mr. Eckhardt was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps. He was discharged as a Captain in 1945, having served primarily in Houston, Texas, and New York, New York. He returned to the University of Missouri and the teaching profession, after his military leave of absence, as a full professor and served the University in that capacity until he became Dean of the School of Law in 1969. When he reached mandatory retirement age as dean in 1977, Mr. Eckhardt returned to full-time teaching.

Mr. Eckhardt married the former Sarah Payne, a native of Columbia, Missouri, in 1939. The Eckhardts have one son, Willard L. Eckhardt, Jr., who attended Duke University and Harvard Law School. Willard L. Eckhardt, Jr. is now a second generation law professor who teaches at the University of Idaho.

During the 110-year history of the School of Law, no professor has served it longer than Willard L. Eckhardt. Because teaching was so important to Mr. Eckhardt, the Missouri Law Review has asked one of his students from each of the six decades during which he taught, from the 1930s to the 1980s, to discuss the Willard L. Eckhardt of that era. Professor William F. Fratcher also has written a tribute as a colleague and close personal friend. The outpouring of affection and gratitude contained in the following pages exemplifies Mr. Eckhardt's prestige and the bittersweet feelings attendant to the end of an era.



WILLARD L. ECKHARDT

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