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In Memoriam



William F. Fratcher
1913 - 1992

William F. Fratcher, Earl F. Nelson and R. B. Price Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Law at the University of Missouri School of Law, passed away on June 24, 1992 after a short illness. He served as a faculty member at the University of Missouri since 1947. Professor Fratcher was one of the world's leading authorities on the law of estates and trusts.

Professor Fratcher excelled as a draftsman. As one of the principal draftsmen in the area of probate law, he made significant contributions to the *Model Probate Code* and the *Uniform Probate Code*. He had a major hand in shaping the probate laws of most states. A commentator wrote that "none had a clearer picture of the problems and their solutions than Bill Fratcher. He had a firm grasp of historical background of the issues and an uncanny

ability to shed a ray of light on every aspect of the subject . . . He can solve a problem with a penetrating analysis and provide a practical solution." Another wrote that he brought "an acutely critical mind to bear on stubborn conceptions and on practical problems thrown up in different social environments." He was noted for his meticulous devotion to accuracy.

At the time of his retirement from the faculty of law in 1983, the *Missouri Law Review* dedicated an issue of the journal in honor of Professor Fratcher.¹ The issue includes a biography and an extensive bibliography. There are tributes to him from some of the persons with whom he was associated, including Russell D. Niles, Paul E. Bayse, F. H. Lawson, and John A. Borron, Jr.² Contributors recognized that Professor Fratcher was one of the most prolific scholars of his generation and a pioneer in revision of probate law in this country.

After his retirement Professor Fratcher continued to teach, research and write. He spent three years as a visiting professor at other law schools. In other years, he taught the course in legal history at the University of Missouri School of Law and at the same time engaged in research and writing. His most important contribution in this period was to author the fourth edition of *Scott on Trusts* for which he had prepared annual supplements since 1982. When a fourth edition of the treatise was planned, Professor Scott suggested that Professor Fratcher author this edition. The twelve volume work was completed in 1991. Since 1961 he has prepared biennial updates for the multi-volume work, Simes & Smith, *The Law of Future Interests*. He served as General Reporter on Trusts for the *International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law* and contributed an article on Mortgages for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Since 1988 he has been a consultant and advisor for the American Law Institute draft of *Trusts* (Third).

From 1983 through 1989 he was a member of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and served as Elder and Clerk of the Session at the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia.

A room in the library at the University of Missouri School of Law is named the Fratcher Rare Book Room.

Professor Fratcher's scholarly contributions were matched by his character and other personal qualities. He was an exemplary colleague; kind, thoughtful, supportive, sensitive, always loyal, and of unflinching good humor. We shall miss him.

By JOE E. COVINGTON, *Dean Emeritus and Phil Sheridan Gibson Professor Emeritus of Law*

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1. 48 Mo. L. REV. 313-585 (1983).
 2. *Id.* at 315-31.