

WILLIAM DRAPER LEWIS

Director, 1923-1947
Council Member, 1923-1949

WILLIAM DRAPER LEWIS was born April 27, 1867. He was admitted to the Philadelphia Bar in 1891. He took a leading part in the organization of The American Law Institute and served as its Director until failing health compelled his resignation in 1947. He died at Northeast Harbor, Maine, on September 3, 1949. To the Institute he gave the most fruitful years of a long and exceptionally useful life.

As an undergraduate at Haverford College he gave promise of future achievement. As a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, he equipped himself for the various types of social service which he was destined thereafter to render. In the law school and at the bar, he manifested all the qualities essential to success in his profession. As a Professor of Law and Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Pennsylvania, he proved himself a stimulating teacher and a competent executive. As Director of the Institute he utilized all the powers which through the years he had in these various ways developed and brought them to bear upon the stupendous task of restating the common law. He more than any other one man should be credited with whatever measure of success the Institute has achieved in this epoch-making enterprise.

It is not often that any one man is found who possesses the diverse qualities for which he was noted. He was fundamentally a man of thought, yet he was always able to act with promptness and efficiency. He had a comprehensive grasp of legal principles, but his mind was a storehouse of relevant precedents. He was able to appreciate niceties of legal reasoning, but he was essentially an economist who placed primary emphasis on the social implications of particular decisions. He was as much at home in a library alcove as the veriest recluse, but he possessed executive talents of a

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high order and was able to organize and utilize the work of other men. He had the patience and thoroughness of a worker trained in research, but he knew the value of time and could impose upon himself and others terminal limits for the completion of pending tasks.

When the work of restatement was first undertaken, Lewis was already a learned lawyer. As that work progressed under his direction and as he gave personal attention to every phase of its development, his legal knowledge steadily increased until he had in a very real sense become a master of the common law.

All who worked under him or with him were impressed by the breadth and thoroughness of his learning, but the characteristic that impressed them most was what can best be described as his loveliness. Of this quality his law students had become aware when in his teaching days they affectionately spoke of him as Uncle Billy. His fellow-workers in the Institute were similarly drawn to him and many of them learned to apply to him the form of address which had originated among his students. Just as soldiers are sometimes moved as much by loyalty to a leader as by devotion to a cause, so some of the best work done for the Institute was done with a desire to satisfy the Director. In such an atmosphere friendship flourishes; and perhaps the happiest aspect of the work of the Institute has been the cohesive fellowship which has colored its life.

Though at home among books, he was a lover of outdoor life. He keenly enjoyed lawn tennis, a game in which he developed considerable skill. Those who with him were wont to climb the mountains of his beloved Mount Desert have happy memories of his youthful delight in strenuous exercise.

When, in his eighty-third year, William Draper Lewis died, he had made for himself a place of high honor in the history of American jurisprudence, and to us his colleagues

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he had bequeathed the enduring memory of happy and stimulating companionship in the successful prosecution of a work of lasting importance

To his widow and children we venture to express our heartfelt sympathy, while at the same time recording our abiding sense of personal loss