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In Memoriam, Maurice Hitchcock Merrill
1897-1985

David Swank, University of Oklahoma College of Law

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IN MEMORIAM

Maurice Hitchcock Merrill, 1897-1985

This issue of the Oklahoma Law Review is dedicated to our beloved Professor Maurice Merrill, "Dr. Merrill" to most of those who knew him during his long career at the College of Law. Even after age and illness had begun to limit his activities, Dr. Merrill would have a family member drive him to the law school, and he would walk, with bulldog tenacity, up its front steps and to his office. As he made his way down the hallways, his greetings were always conveyed with his characteristic warm smile and twinkling blue eyes. His death on August 3, 1985, has left a void that no one else can fill.

In volume 25, number 4 of this Review, November 1972, a number of his colleagues and the student officers of the Review paid homage to this son of Oklahoma. He had retired, but as then Dean Robert R. Wright III wrote of him, "It is my observation that he probably does not work over about sixty hours per week now. That is some measure of 'retirement,' I suppose for a man of the caliber of Maurice H. Merrill." He was, indeed, indefatigable, even in advanced years.

Since the previous issue that is dedicated to Dr. Merrill fully details his career and works up to 1972, no attempt will be made here to add to those comments, and we refer our readers to that issue for his achievements. There, he is praised as a man of brilliant intellect and memory, as a teacher who challenged his students to work toward perfection, and as an attorney who was versed in all areas of the law; he was, in short, a man who loved and cherished the law and dedicated his life to it.

Along with the many hundreds of students who came to revere Dr. Merrill as a teacher, his colleagues at the College of Law and the lawmakers with whom he worked to improve old laws and to write new ones, there are the many who knew him as a friend—College of Law staff members; his longtime personal secretary, Gwen Rogers; and yes, even the constant round-robin of building custodians. All shared conversations with Dr. Merrill, all exchanged warm greetings with him, and all now miss his presence.

The kindnesses of Dr. Merrill are not generally known except to those who were the recipients, but he was a generous and compassionate man. He was also a consummate gentleman, courteous, comfortable, and at home in all walks of life. With his brilliant career as writer, statesman, scholar, and professor, it would have been perfectly understandable for him to have held himself aloof from all but his peers, but he never did. His relations with others reflected his belief that all men are created equal. He had a warm place in his heart for the earnest students who published the Oklahoma Law Review, to which he was a frequent contributor, and also, once it came into existence in 1973, to the American Indian Law Review. The light from his brilliant
career shone also on the College of Law and helped to make it an outstanding school.

Many persons had urged Dr. Merrill to write his autobiography, and although he had made a substantial beginning on it, he had put it aside to write the history of the University of Oklahoma College of Law, now unfinished. Those tasks fall to others to complete, and whomever undertakes to write his biography, though it will be a task of monumental proportions to equal the "bigness" of the man and his intellect, will surely find it a joy to detail for others, who never knew him, what all of us who did, discovered about this rare man.

In the earlier issue of the *Oklahoma Law Review*, dedicated to Dr. Merrill, such great men as Dean Page Keeton, Dean Emeritus Charles Nutting, Distinguished Professor Robert A. Leflar, Dean Emeritus Eugene Kuntz, Professor Ralph Fuchs, and Professor Henry Foster extolled the "merits of Merrill," and perhaps the last line of Dean Wright's introduction to that volume is once more suitable here:

"It has been our blessing that Maurice Merrill came our way and devoted his life to the teaching profession, to the law, to this University and this school, and to Oklahoma."

Dr. Merrill, you are missed.

*David Swank*
Interim Dean of the
College of Law