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## Edwin D. Dickinson

*Frank C. Newman\**

THIS MESSAGE is addressed particularly to our friends who knew Boalt Hall during the years of the New Deal and World War II. Edwin D. Dickinson, who from 1936 to 1948 was Dean of the University of California School of Law, died this year at his home in St. Helena, California. He was 73 years of age.

Ned Dickinson served the University for three years as Professor of International Law before he began the twelve additional years as Boalt's dean. When he resigned the deanship in 1948 he left Berkeley for the University of Pennsylvania. After retirement there, in 1956, he and Mrs. Dickinson returned to the Bay Area, where he taught for a time at Hastings before they established their residence in St. Helena. He also rejoined our faculty informally, as a lecturer for the Summer Workshop in International Legal Studies.

The faculty that Dickinson led when he took on his administrative tasks included Armstrong, Ballantine, Ferrier, Haynes, Kidd, Langmaid, McBaine, McGovney, McMurray, Radin, Stone, and Traynor. It was a Golden Age for Boalt, and even when he left seven of those teachers were still in residence. Dickinson was a wise leader. One measure of his wisdom is that he knew the unique capacities of the men (and a remarkable woman) who were his colleagues and, by freeing them from management chores, helped ensure their productivity, their camaraderie, and—above all—their excellence and integrity in matters of law. He was a builder, too; and from his desk came plans that are now reflected in the new physical plant and a new faculty.

Many of us never observed the Dean from the bullpen as students in a classroom. That was partly because deans are denied a full teaching load and partly because his basic courses—International Law and Conflicts—could be chosen only from a crowded curriculum in the third year. Nonetheless, even as an interested bystander I know that his lectures were ably prepared, thorough, and challenging.

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Those of us who knew him well enjoyed his wit and appreciated his good taste, good sense, and liberality regarding academic life, civic and world affairs, and human relations. Many nonacademic colleagues—at State Bar meetings and at the Bohemian Grove, for instance—shared the friendship that was our privilege at Boalt Hall. His nationwide repute as a university leader, based on sound scholarship, was manifested in countless associations—official and unofficial—with judges, government officials, lawyers, and fellow professors.

Evidence of the recognition he received is attested by two illustrative items, relating to Legal Education and International Law, his chief interests throughout his career. In 1949 he was elected to the presidency of the Association of American Law Schools; in 1952–53, to the presidency of the American Society of International Law.<sup>1</sup>

Young men, perhaps uncertain of their goals, sought his advice. I quote from a letter written to Ned thirteen years ago by one who had been unsure that law study and subsequent teaching were fit pursuits: “I have wondered, recently, whether I am indebted to you even more as counselor than as Dean.” The letter and the debt are mine.

I am certain indeed of a further debt, Boalt Hall’s. We can all thank Edwin D. Dickinson for his acceptance of and contribution to some School traits that marked also the legacy of his predecessors, William Carey Jones and Orrin Kip McMurray. They are (1) a constant insistence on quality, (2) a recognition that this goal demands not only talent and dedication but also hard work, and (3) a fine tradition of public service. Our dean did his job well. A deserved memorial is the School of Law itself.

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<sup>1</sup>For further references see Judge Herbert Goodrich’s tribute, *Edwin DeWitt Dickinson*, 109 U. PA. L. REV. 919 (1961).