

teaching and to his university by his respected service as counsellor and committeeman.

In the latter role, he contributed his salty advice, always realistic about human finiteness but always encouraging about the need to struggle. Regularly elected by the faculty to key committees, he continually contributed to the strengthening of the quality of that faculty.

But it is in his teaching of political theory that he will live for a generation of students. Conservative in a discipline not noted for that viewpoint, he impressed students and colleagues alike with the relevance of conservatism to the modern world. More than one of us were pressed firmly, but never arrogantly, when we accepted uncritically the fashionable currents of liberalism. But for all of us, he demonstrated a constant sensitivity to our demands for improving the condition of humankind, even though he was skeptical about that eventuality.

The contradictions each of us possesses emerged in Ceph in an admiration for the clarity and necessity of Machiavelli's advice to *The Prince*, even though he never manipulated persons in his own life. His passion for Woodrow Wilson's lofty idealism joined an appreciation of the earthiness of humankind to which such ideals would apply. He would lovingly help students draw out from themselves imminent knowledge in a manner that Socrates knew well. Events of the external world constantly marched into his classes, not shadows on a cave wall but the stuff of life, important for inquiry and application—often accompanied by seering criticism of the hypocrisy of political leaders.

He felt deeply about his party and its programs, reflecting his roots in an old family of rural southern Ohio. But he would condemn his own party leaders for violations of due process, for infringement upon free speech and press, or for just plain stupidity. Yet his partisanship was not mean, and he never let it define his friendships; he was with Jefferson who once wrote a friend that, "I have never suffered political opinion to enter into the estimate of my private friendships, nor did I ever abdicate the society of a friend on that account till he had first withdrawn that friendship."

At his last class before retirement, he gave no sentimental discourse on a lifetime of teaching. Rather, he brought to class a bottle of Gran Marnier and a glass for each student, and they sipped and discussed political theory in an unspoken communion with all those students who had gone before.

Cephus Stephens always practiced his profession with style, passion, insight, and sensitivity to young minds. A translator and advocate of scholarship rather than a contributor to journals, he provided much to the national profession in a small college by his love of intellect and by his wise advice about the political system. In this, he personified the master teachers of small colleges everywhere. A generation of citizens are better men and women in some respect because of them. And I, like my colleagues, am less a fool and more respectful

of intellectual differences because of Cephus Stephens. He will be remembered in Shakespeare's words for Wolsey:

"He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading."

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Robert Renbert Wilson

Robert Renbert Wilson, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of Political Science, died on April 29, 1975, at the age of 76. He was born in Hillsboro, Texas in 1898. He received his undergraduate degree from Austin College, which later awarded him an honorary degree, an M.A. degree from Princeton University and, in 1927, the Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. He felt that each of these institutions had made significant contributions to his academic development. Edward S. Corwin at Princeton and George Grafton Wilson at Harvard had a particularly deep influence on his subsequent career.

Robert Wilson came to the newly founded Duke University in 1925 and became the first chairman of the Department of Political Science when it was separated from the Department of Economics in 1934. He served from 1934 to 1948 as Chairman of the department and subsequently for some years as the Director of Graduate Studies in Political Science. In 1948 he also began teaching in the Duke University Law School. During this long time span, he functioned in many administrative and advisory capacities in the University. He was a visiting professor in a number of leading American universities, including Texas, Stanford and North Carolina. In 1951-52, he was a lecturer at the University of Istanbul Law School in Turkey, an experience which he always fondly recalled.

Beginning in 1931-32, Professor Wilson served in a number of capacities in the U.S. Department of State. He later became a full-time advisor on commercial treaties in 1944-46, and a consultant from 1946-1953. During these years he was a member of a number of U.S. delegations to negotiate commercial treaties. He was, as one competent observer recalled, "the architect of the precedent-making China treaty" of 1946. He was a meticulous worker and his role as a negotiator and treaty drafter bore the imprint of these qualities.

Robert Wilson took an active interest from the beginning in the affairs of the Southern Political Science Association and the American Political Science Association and attended the various meetings with regularity. In 1940, not long after it had been organized, he was elected President of the Southern Political Science Association. In 1938-41, he was selected as a member of the Executive Council of the American Political Science Association. He was frequently requested to read and approve articles,

submitted for publication by the *Journal of Politics* and the *American Political Science Review*, on which he served as a member of the Editorial Board in 1943-45. His appraisals always served to provide authors of rejected articles, particularly young authors, with detailed criticisms and suggestions which could only be viewed as constructive. But Robert Wilson's primary professional loyalties were to the associations and publications in his special field of international law. He was a member of the Executive Council of the American Society of International Law for terms in 1929-32 and 1936-39 and of the Board of Editors of the *American Journal of International Law* for many years after 1937. In this capacity, he joined in that year such scholars as Edwin M. Borchard, Clyde Eagleton, Charles G. Fenwick, Charles Cheyney Hyde and Quincy Wright. In 1954-55 he was elected Vice President and in 1957-58 President of the American Society of International Law. His professional colleagues in the international law field always viewed him with admiration and respect.

Professor Wilson's numerous writings evidence the variety of his interests during the period prior to World War II; during the World War II years, topics dealing with the law of war received primary attention. During the two decades after the war, he paid special attention to the law of commercial treaties (*International Law in Treaties* in 1949, *The United States Commercial Treaties and International Law* in 1960), "a new branch of international law" to which Professor Wilson's analysis "made an indispensable contribution" according to Professor Wolfgang Friedmann. In the late 1950's, Professor Wilson concentrated his research on legal problems involving the Commonwealth of Nations and its individual members. Under his editorship and the auspices of the Committee of the Center for Commonwealth Studies, of which he served as Chairman from 1960 to 1966, several volumes of note were published (*The International Law Standard and Commonwealth Development* in 1966, *International and Comparative Law of the Commonwealth* in 1968, and *International Law and Contemporary Commonwealth Issues* in 1971. He

continued his research to the end, and his last editorial comment was submitted for publication in the *American Journal of International Law* a few days before his death.

One of his students, in appraising the foundations that undergirded the teachings and writings of Professor Wilson, concluded that:

Three stand out. One of these is humanism—the proposition that law and political science deal in the last analysis with the human individual and his problems. Another is empiricism—the proposition that deduced legal rules and hypothetical principles pass the test of human experience. But the test of human experience is not sufficient in itself. For the third and architectonic proposition concerns the function of law and that function is to serve as a standard for human conduct.

Robert Wilson was, above all, a great teacher and happily devoted endless hours to discussions with his students. Indeed, his first commitments were to his students, after those to his family and his church. They came to appreciate his depth of scholarship, his knowledge of the literature, his disdain for the superficial, his insistence upon seeking and checking the original sources, and his encouragement and respect for an independence in point of view. He aided all of his students in every way possible and followed their careers with almost the dedication of a parent. In consequence, I know of no political scientist who was held in higher esteem by his students. The Festschrift by his former students, *De lege pactorum, Essays in Honor of Robert Renbert Wilson* (1970), gives evidence of this respect and affection. As the late David R. Deener, then Provost of Tulane, concluded in his preface to that volume, "International law and political science owe many debts, then, to Professor Wilson, but ne'er so many as do his students. For his students, these essays attempt to acknowledge those debts. They also say: Pro merit, magistro."

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