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SAMUEL PRINCE AS A DEAN

ROBERT McC. FIGG, JR.*

The greatest compliment I have ever had was Dean Prince's selection of me to be his successor at the School of Law. It was like being installed as guardian of his child, and I have regarded it as a heavy responsibility to carry on at the institution which had grown and developed under him and was nurtured by him with loving care for the preceding thirteen years.

Dean Prince never really left the Law School even when he retired to his native Anderson. He was always with us in spirit, stimulating, encouraging, and challenging every one of us, faculty and students alike.

Dean Prince studied law with his late father, Judge Prince. He did not attend a law school, and hence he entered upon his law school career with no pre-conceived notions of how a law school should be conducted. His interest lay in improving the image of the legal profession in South Carolina to the end that it would emulate the high traditions of its past and would respond to the public's need for faithful and competent service in the future. His approach to the study of law was on a broad rather than parochial plane. He urged his students to think broadly and to love the law which they were training themselves to serve. He recognized that the education of the bar of the future had to be in the law schools, for the practitioner no longer has the time, the pace of today's practice being what it is, to supervise adequately the studies of those who wished to be lawyers.

On coming to the Law School, Dean Prince entered upon a program to bring it in step with the top flight law schools of the country and offer to our students the same approach as those schools do to the study of the law. He set as our goal that the young men and young women who entrust their legal education to us will be enabled after graduation to go wherever their inclinations and opportunities may take them, unconfined by provincial educational preparation.

He persuaded the legislature to end the so-called "diploma privilege" whereby our graduates would automatically be admitted to the bar without taking the examination along with everyone else. This progressive step laid down a challenge to

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both faculty and students, and greatly sharpened the school's morale.

He found that the school had for the most part a part-time faculty. Realizing that a full-time faculty was essential to the development of scholarship and affording adequate counselling to the students, he began the slow work of collecting a group of trained and gifted law teachers dedicated to full-time teaching, and our excellent faculty of today resulted from the success of his efforts.

He travelled to other law schools all over the country and examined their procedures. Since I have been Dean, I have found that every legal educator that I have met knows and asks me about Dean Prince, and our school is known far and wide because of their high regard for him and his interest in legal education.

Under his leadership, the school's admission standards were steadily raised, and today a college degree is our basic admission requirement. This is necessary, because the present degree program requires a student in the time honored three years to cover more than twice as many areas of the law as existed when I went to law school, for example, and hence a law student today has to be able to carry a greater work load and cover more in less time.

Dean Prince brought about the construction of a new law school building which was dedicated in 1950. This building was perhaps the best appointed building of its kind as of the time of its construction, incorporating new ideas developed by him.

Recognizing that faculty improvement was essential in developing and retaining an excellent faculty, he was the moving spirit in the creation by the South Carolina Bar Association of the Law School Endowment Fund, the income from which among other things makes possible the attendance by faculty members of institutes, seminars, and other educational opportunities from time to time. Dean Prince continued until his death to serve the law school as chairman of the committee of the bar which obtains the contributions to the Endowment Fund.

When he first came to the Law School, Dean Prince found an institution which was doing a creditable job, but which from its early days had had to struggle to discharge its mission. He devised the plans and did the work to make it a modern law school able to discharge its mission in the world of today, and

after his retirement we have continued his policies in the further development of his dream.

Dean Prince's interest in the improvement of legal education extended far beyond our school and state. He was the founder of the Southeastern Regional Law Teachers Conference composed of the faculties of the law schools in all the states of the southeast from Virginia and Kentucky to Louisiana. At his death he was the honorary permanent chairman of that conference. The vitality of the conference and the keen interest in its work on the part of so many law schools over so large an area is continuing evidence of the great influence which his singleness of purpose and contagious enthusiasm so often accomplished. Dean Prince also envisioned a southeastern law center for the training of law teachers located in a central city like Atlanta; and while such a center has not yet been created, the need which he recognized is there, and I feel his dream may well eventually become a reality.

Dean Prince's interest in the Law School was matched by his unfailing interest in the legal profession in South Carolina and the activities of the state's bar association. Through him their several strength was effectively combined in the support of those things which served the best interests of each. In all that he set out to accomplish for the law school he sought and received the organized bar's support. In support of the constructive steps taken in his thirteen years at the Law School for the improvement of the legal profession he threw the weight of his own and the school's influence. These steps included the creation of and service on the judicial council to supervise and continually study the administration of justice in South Carolina; the amendment of the Supreme Court's rules on admission to the bar so as to require a degree from an accredited law school in order to be eligible to take the bar examination and the creation of the Committee on Character and Fitness; the establishment by the Supreme Court of procedures for disciplinary action; and the adoption by court rule of the American Bar Association's Canons of Professional Ethics as the standard of professional responsibility of all practicing lawyers in this state.

The bar of our state in the coming years will reflect the results of higher law school admission standards, higher standards for graduation, higher standards for admission to the bar, and higher standards for the practicing bar. And the bar of the

future will always be a monument to the vision and foresight and imagination of Dean Prince in envisioning what would do the greatest amount of good for the profession, and his unflagging zeal in helping to bring these things about.

While active at the Law School, Dean Prince taught a course to beginning students in which he dealt with the ancient origins of the law and our legal system. He made his notes available to me when I succeeded to the task, and after I read them, I urged him to let me arrange their publication. We agreed, and the result is a most interesting and instructive pamphlet entitled "Our Common Law Heritage." In a foreword I wrote that in his teachings Dean Prince communicated to his students "his own love for the law and its history; and the privilege which they had to come under the influence of the great moral force which was his made every one of them a better lawyer and a worthier officer of the Court." I said that I had urged him to leave "the essence of his teachings as a legacy to future new students," and I take pleasure each year in delivering a copy to our incoming classes, as the legatees.

In 1963, the students belonging to the Phi Alpha Delta legal fraternity organized an intra-mural moot court competition which they named the Samuel L. Prince Competition. The winner each year receives the Prince Scholarship. Significant is the fact that these students were not here when he was at the Law School, but they felt impelled to honor him with their constructive contribution to the school's well-being.

In 1961, the graduating class, who had been the last class to enter while he was Dean, invited Dean Prince to be their commencement speaker. He responded with a moving address which he entitled "The Uncommon Man". The text which he took would be regarded as his credo by those who knew Dean Prince: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business; he shall stand before kings. He shall not stand before mean men."

He urged the graduates to join "the ranks of the uncommon men of the South Carolina Bar who neither by character nor performance tarnish the honor of the profession or become its problems, but who strive to improve the profession and become its answers."

Samuel L. Prince throughout his long career bore witness to the spirit of the legal profession, that inspiration which has moved so many great men to love, to study, to teach, to practice,

and to establish the law. He wrote in the law's service a record of unselfish devotion, moral courage, and fine accomplishment, a record of which we all, who were privileged to know him, are justly proud. He was a pillar of the law that he loved. He upheld its traditions with indomitable and unyielding purpose and with all the strength of the strong man that he was. He embraced its lofty ideals and inspirations as they came to him, and passed them on with even greater luster.

In the Scriptures, the Apostle Paul spoke with pride of the days in Tarsus when he sat "at the feet of Gamaliel, and [was] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." Like the Apostle of old, all who were privileged to be associated with Samuel L. Prince, whether as a teacher, or as a student, or as a lawyer, or in whatever other way, have sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and have been taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.