

George Sylvanus Moler

Professor of Physics

— May 20, 1932

In the death of Professor George Sylvanus Moler, Cornell University loses an alumnus and member of its Faculty who, through his achievement in applied science and his work during nearly fifty years as a thorough and sympathetic teacher, has exerted a strong influence for good among his colleagues and among the many students who have benefited by his instruction.

Immediately after graduation from Cornell in 1875 he joined the teaching staff in physics and as an instructor, assistant professor, and professor he remained an active member of the department of Physics until his retirement in 1917. With Professor William A. Anthony he soon after built what is believed to have been the first dynamo made in America, which was displayed and operated at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 and subsequently used to operate two arc lights for the illumination of the Cornell Campus. The construction of this dynamo marked the beginning of electrical engineering instruction in this country; under Professor Moler, in annexes back of Sibley and Franklin Hall, there was developed the famous "dynamo laboratory," in which many leaders in the fast growing electrical industry received their early training and an inspiration from Professor Moler's personality.

Always working and trying something new, he had the knack of making a thing "go" and a patience and perseverance, not only in the execution of the work but in explaining it to his students, that caused them to become absorbed in his ideas and imbued with his enthusiasm.

Although deeply interested in electricity, Professor Moler did not confine his attention to this field. His photographic laboratory was noteworthy. Always interested in improving experimental technique in physics, he became engrossed at one time in photometry and the study of illumination; later in x-rays, when he took one of the first x-ray photographs made in this country. Many practical devices in Rockefeller Hall are due to his ingenuity and foresight.

Professor Moler was always practical. With little thought of self, he gave unstintingly of his time in aiding his many friends in town as well as in college circles. Many a practical problem—perhaps the adjustment of a church organ or a regulator for the college clock—was taken to Professor Moler for solution. He was at his best when helping others. When we think of Professor Moler, we do not think first of his ability and resourcefulness; what

comes most vividly to our minds is the picture of his kind nature and unselfish helpfulness. These are the traits that won our hearts and will continue to make his memory dear.

Source: Fac. Rec. p. 1737, 1755 Resolutions of the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University, November, Nineteen Hundred And Thirty-Two

Retired, June 1917 (Fac. Rec. p. 910)