

William Ridgely Orndorff

Professor of Organic Chemistry

1862 — Nov. 1, 1927

Through the death of William Ridgely Orndorff, Cornell University and the scientific world have lost an able and inspiring teacher and an eminent investigator,

Born in Baltimore in 1862, he attended Baltimore City College, and in 1887 received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University, where he had held the position of personal assistant to Professor Remsen.

He came to Cornell in 1887 as instructor in organic chemistry, was advanced in 1890 to an assistant professorship of organic chemistry, and to the professorship of organic and physiological chemistry in 1901, his title being changed to professor of organic chemistry in 1923.

Professor Orndorff was the author of a Laboratory Manual of Organic Chemistry, and he translated Salkowski's *Laboratory Manual of Physiological and Pathological Chemistry*. He was also the coauthor, with Professor Remsen, of one of the leading text-books on organic chemistry. He was a member of the International Jury of Awards, Paris Exposition, 1889, the St. Louis Exposition, 1904, the Panama Pacific Exposition at San Francisco, 1915, and was a special agent, U. S. Census, 1890. He was a member of a number of scientific and honorary societies. The organization of the Summer School of the University (now termed the Summer Session), and also of the Town and Gown Club of Ithaca, were largely due to Professor Orndorff's initiative.

The lectures of Professor Orndorff were unusually clear, logical and comprehensive, and displayed a wealth of information concerning all branches of chemistry as well as of sciences other than his own.

His published investigations comprise seventy-four articles, each of which embodies the results of very thorough and accurate experimental work. He was a steadfast supporter of sound scholarship and was severely critical of superficial or inconclusive experimentation.

His influence upon many generations of students, both graduate and undergraduate, was profound, and he inspired them with much of his own enthusiasm and devotion for the science. This is attested by the high standard which his former students have continued to maintain in their later work.

Both to his colleagues in the Department of Chemistry, and to those working in other scientific fields, who came to him for advice and assistance, Professor Orndorff was always ready to give freely of his time and of his abundant store of information and experience. The willingness of one so fully occupied with his own important work to be of help to others aroused among his colleagues a feeling of most sincere and grateful appreciation,

One of his outstanding traits was his loyalty: loyalty to the Department of Chemistry and to the University which he served unselfishly and without thought of public acclaim, loyalty to his family, to his colleagues and to his friends. By all who knew him his passing is sincerely mourned.

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