

Robert S. Pasley

March 16, 1912 — June 21, 1995

Robert S. Pasley, the Frank B. Ingersoll Professor of Law Emeritus, died on June 21, 1995 at his retirement home in Sarasota, Florida, at the age of 83. With his death, the Cornell Law School community lost a beloved and esteemed member.

Bob was born in New York City on March 16, 1912. He attended Princeton University, earning his A.B. degree there in 1933. While at Princeton he was Circulation Manager of the *Daily Princetonian* and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Bob pursued his legal education at Cornell and was awarded the LL.B. degree in 1936. He was Business Manager as well as a member of the Board of Editors of the *Cornell Law Quarterly* and was President of the Law Student Association. He ranked first in his class and was elected to Phi Kappa Phi and to the order of the Coif.

From 1936-42, Bob was associated with the New York City firm of Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft and was concerned primarily with corporate law problems. During the latter part of 1942 he was with the New York Office of the Alien Property Custodian, as Chief of the Real and Personal Property Section of the Division of Investigation and Research.

With the coming of World War II, Bob began a period of military service that would last until 1946. After joining the Army as a private, he was selected to attend the Judge Advocate General's Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in December 1943. Assigned to the European Theater of Operations, he handled mainly the review of court-martial cases and other military justice problems. Following separation from the Army, Bob held a commission as Colonel in the Judge Advocate General's Corps Reserve and served as a member of the Board of Visitors of the Judge Advocate General's School in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Bob's military service was followed by eight years as a government lawyer with important responsibilities in the Office of General Counsel of the United States Navy Department. These included his successive appointments as Counsel for the Office of Naval Research in 1947, as assistant general counsel of the Navy Department in 1949, and as acting general counsel in 1953.

In 1948 Bob served as a special consultant to the Morgan Committee which was appointed by the Secretary of Defense to draft the Uniform Code of Military Justice. During 1952-54, as a Lecturer at Catholic University of America Law School, he taught the course in corporation law.

In September 1954, Bob joined the faculty of the Cornell Law School as Associate Professor of Law. He was also made Director of Admissions and administered the admissions program for three years. He served as the School's representative on the Educational Testing Service's Law School Admission Test Policy Committee as well as on the LSAT Test Development Committee. He was promoted to Professor of Law in 1957 and was named to the Frank B. Ingersoll chair in 1974. He retired in 1976.

Bob taught an impressive array of courses during his twenty-two years at Cornell. These included Government Contracts, Equity, Trusts & Estates, Legal History, and Remedies. A pioneering course on Computers and the Law also deserves special mention.

The Cornell Law Class of 1968 gave Bob a silver bowl which was inscribed with a quotation from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: "SOUNNIGE IN MORAL VERTU WAS HIS SPECHE AND GLADLY WOLDE HE LERNE, AND GLADLY TECHE".

Bob was not only an excellent teacher but also an outstanding scholar who wrote extensively on a wide variety of subjects. His practical experience as a government lawyer made his articles on government contracts particularly insightful and his broad personal experience in the military enabled him to write on the subject of court-martial and military justice with considerable authority. In a more popular vein, he also published several articles on Sherlock Holmes in the *Baker Street Journal*.

Bob's Cornell years provided him with a number of opportunities to teach and do research elsewhere through summer school and sabbatical leave teaching appointments. These included the University of Wisconsin Law School, Stanford Law School, Catholic University of America Law School, Case Western Reserve Law School and Queen Mary College Faculty of Law, University of London.

Among Bob's professional memberships were the American Bar Association, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Tompkins County Bar Association, American Society for Legal History, and American Law Institute. He performed invaluable public service as a consultant to the New York State Law Revision Commission as well as to the New York Joint Legislative Committee to Study Revision of Corporation Laws.

Bob's active involvement in Cornell affairs was not limited to the Law School but extended to matters of University-wide concern. In 1969-70 he chaired a committee which reviewed the organization and procedures of the University Faculty and recommended the establishment of a Faculty Council of Representatives to serve as the Faculty's principal voice in the governance of Cornell. From 1971-74, Bob was the Law School Representative on

this Council. He was a consultant on legal and business matters for the Arecibo Observatory Upgrading Project, a Cornell project sponsored by the National Science Foundation. During 1962-66, he was on the Board of Traffic Control and in 1963-67, was a member of the Committee on Student Conduct, serving as its chairman in 1965-66. Bob also served a term as President of the Statler Club.

While a resident of Ithaca, Bob gave generously of his time and talents to wide-ranging civic and community causes. serving as a member of the City of Ithaca Board of Zoning Appeals as well as the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission. He served as a Trustee of the Cornell Library Association (Ithaca Public Library) and was a founding member and first President of the Ithaca-Cayuga Rotary Club.

In his April 22, 1974 recommendation of Bob for appointment as the first Frank B. Ingersoll Professor of Law, Dean Roger Cramton paid a fitting tribute to his faculty colleague and friend. Dean Cramton said, in part:

Professor Pasley's service at Cornell has demonstrated a rare combination of abilities. He is a highly effective, stimulating and kindly classroom teacher, and at the same time a careful, capable and productive legal scholar. He has a highly cultivated mind and has won the universal affection and esteem of both his colleagues and his students. He has contributed his time unstintingly to university activities, bringing tactful good judgment to issues of community concern...

A man of culture, Professor Pasley has high moral principles, is straightforward and effective in his relationships with others. Well read, a good conversationalist, tolerant of the views of others, warm and congenial manner, he contributes much to any group of which he is a part. It is not surprising that he is highly respected by his colleagues.

In a note to Dean Russell Osgood shortly after Bob's death, his wife Mary wrote: "Bob's heart was left in the Cornell Law School. His 22 years of dedicated teaching were the most fulfilling part of his life."

Eight months after Bob's death, his wife, Mary Pasley, died on February 27, 1996 in Sarasota, Florida. He is survived by his daughters, Nancy Pasley of Deerfield Beach, Florida, and Mary Pasley of New York City; his son and daughter-in-law, Robert S. Pasley, Jr. and Gay L. Pasley, and two granddaughters, Virginia and Heather, of Alexandria, Virginia.

W. David Curtiss, Gray Thoron, Russell K. Osgood