

John Harold Sherry

December 19, 1902 — December 26, 1984

In spring 1935 the School of Hotel Administration made one of its finest decisions for its future. John H. Sherry of New York City was invited to come to Ithaca once a week to present a course about the law as it related to innkeeping. At that time he was counsel for a number of hotels in New York City and for the American Hotel Association. His services were to be rendered without compensation. He accepted the lecturer's appointment on July 1, 1935.

For twenty-five years he left New York on Wednesday night aboard the Lehigh Valley Railroad and returned on Thursday night. He expanded his offerings to two courses, "Business Law" and "Law of Innkeeping." He was able to balance the demands of his active practice and family to commute on a regular basis for that one day a week at Cornell. He was promoted to professor on July 1, 1956.

When the railroad no longer offered service to Ithaca, he opted for an alternative, Mohawk Airlines. John used this and its successor organizations for fifteen years in spite of the uncertainty of reliable service. A combination of commercial airlines and air charters were used when necessary. The closest call he experienced in meeting his obligation came when a spring blizzard struck the Ithaca area. A private plane chartered by the University was scheduled to leave the Teterboro airport with five other passengers. The pilot learned that the Ithaca airport was closing, and a vote was taken whether to fly. John argued eloquently in favor of going but lost the case 5-1. On appeal, as the weather deteriorated even further, John lost again and accepted the realization of missing his first Cornell class in thirty-six years. However, with this perfect record hanging in the balance, the gods of mercy smiled. For the first time in its history, Cornell University closed down and all classes were canceled. John's record remained unblemished.

In fall 1975 John relinquished his teaching responsibilities at Cornell to his son, Professor John E. H. Sherry. At a reception in John's honor upon the occasion of his retirement, a testimonial resolution read:

*JOHN H. SHERRY, Professor of Law, Counselor, Scholar. Whereas, we, his colleagues, associates and friends desire to witness his forty years of continuous instruction at the School of Hotel Administration; and whereas, we desire to testify to the prosperity of his students because of his wisdom, dedication and leadership; be it resolved, noted by all men, and sealed by those present that we express our appreciation and acknowledge our gratitude for his loyalty, service, and friendship. Ithaca, New York,
September 4, 1975*

John remained active in the practice of law. His book, *The Laws of Innkeepers*, was revised and continues to be a seminal contribution to the hospitality field. He remained active in many industry, legal, and professional associations and visited the school regularly. The School of Hotel Administration established a scholarship in his honor. He was elected professor emeritus by the board of trustees on January 26, 1980.

John Sherry was renowned for his skillful instruction, colorful use of language, wise counsel, genial graciousness, and most remarkable record of teaching at Cornell. We were saddened to learn of his passing on December 26, 1984.

Richard A. Compton, Donal A. Dermody, Robert M. Chase