

John Courtney

March 20, 1880 — January 27, 1957

The death of John Courtney on January 27, 1957 brought to a close a long career of service to Cornell University. Professor Courtney had retired from teaching in June of 1952 but had carried on actively with his important work as Secretary-Treasurer of the Cornell Society of Hotelmen.

Professor Courtney was born in Illinois on March 20, 1880. He joined the Army as soon as he could persuade the recruiting sergeant that he was of age. He had risen to the rank of captain in the artillery at the close of the first world war when he returned to civilian life. He joined, in September 1922, the very first group of students of the newly organized Department of Hotel Administration, and by virtue of transferred credits was graduated with the first class in June of 1925.

After tours of duty in accounting for the firm of Horwath and Horwath and at such hotels as the first Waldorf-Astoria and the Lincoln, he was called back to Cornell to assist in the development of the specialized accounting program of the Department of Hotel Administration. During his career the offerings of the Department expanded from a single course to a list at his retirement in 1952 of nineteen courses, enough to warrant the official approval of the program as satisfying the academic requirements for the Certificate in Public Accounting by the New York State Education Department. Others participated in this expansion, but much of the work of organization was that of John Courtney.

As a classroom teacher Professor Courtney was unexcelled. A clear thinker, his expositions were models of lucidity. An amiable person, he was patience itself with the struggling student, but he was doggedly persistent in holding the potentially indolent to his task.

In research in hotel accounting Professor Courtney was a pioneer. His early studies of hotel operating ratios became models for later researchers. Among his contributions were *Normal Hotel Operation*, *Basic Accounting Principles*, *The Flexible Budget*, and *The Small Hotel Problem*.

Fully as important to the Department (later the School) of Hotel Administration as his teaching and research, was Professor Courtney's service as Secretary-Treasurer of the Cornell Society of Hotelmen. As a member of the first class Courtney was one of the organizers of that society. As life-long Secretary-Treasurer he was its continuing

mentor. To him must go a very considerable share of credit for developing the organization into one of the strongest of school alumni groups at Cornell or elsewhere.

Fundamentally a friendly person, Professor Courtney was active in all aspects of community life, a Rotarian, a thirty-third degree Mason.

His civic friends, his fellow alumni, his faculty colleagues join Mrs. Courtney and their daughter, Mrs. Genevieve Courtney Bushey, in regret at the passing of a beloved colleague.

Robert A. Beck, H. B. Meek, Frank Randolph