

John Robert Sitlington Sterrett

— June 15, 1914

The Secretary on behalf of a committee appointed by the President (Hammond, chairman, Bennett, Bristol) reported the following resolutions on the death of Professor Sterrett, which were adopted by rising vote:

“At the close of the last College year Professor John Robert Sitlington Sterrett, head of the Department of Greek, passed from life in the hospital of the City of Ithaca. The Faculty of the University places on its records this memorial of its appreciation of the personality and services of the departed scholar.

For twenty-seven years he was professor of the Greek language and literature in various institutions of this country, nearly half of which time he spent at Cornell University. As a young scholar he traveled through Greece and Asia Minor and by his archaeological and epigraphical work, filling practically the whole of the first three volumes of the publications of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, he established a world-wide reputation. These earliest labors were in the field for which he had a peculiar aptitude. Down to the last days of his life he had an intense desire to return to the problems of Hellenic Archaeology, in which the achievements of his young manhood had won the approbation and applause of the chief scholars of Europe.

He was a valuable contributor to the education both of his colleagues in the Faculty and of his students in the class-room. To the former he was an exemplar of single hearted devotion to his work and the incarnation of the spirit of veracity. To the latter he imparted intimately the precious ideas and ideals of Greek civilization, which he so deeply loved and understood.

He was a man of very conservative views, of extremely rigorous, even stoical ideals of duty. He had a passion for the scholar's labor and the long exacting hours spent daily in his study in Goldwin Smith Hall were to him as the breath of life.

His last work was unfortunately left a torso,—his translation of Strabo's Geography and the reconstruction of the text. Most of it was done under the strain of ill health, but with unflagging industry.

His outward life imaged his inward character, a character marked by simplicity, transparent candor, and rugged dignity.”

Source: Records, p. 645, October 14, 1914.