

Romeyn Yatman Thatcher

November 9, 1885 — February 11, 1963

Professor Emeritus Romeyn Yatman Thatcher had a long and distinguished association with Cornell University that started with his enrollment in the Class of 1909 and was broken by his death February 11, 1963. He served his University with a steady consistency, which was characteristic of his life.

Professor Thatcher was born in Buffalo, New York, November 9, 1885, the son of Frank H. and Marietta Taylor Thatcher. He was educated in the Buffalo school system, graduating first in his class from Public School No. 19 and third in a class of 200 from Buffalo Central High School in 1904.

Professor Thatcher entered the Civil Engineering at Cornell in September 1905. As a student, he was active in the Andrew D. White Debating Club, belonged to the Scalp and Blade Society, and was a member of the varsity cross-country team and track squad. He graduated from Cornell with a fine scholastic record in June 1909. His interest in track continued after graduation as he served for over thirty years as an official for both indoor and outdoor meets. His specialty in officiating was the pole vault in which he was an expert.

After graduation, Professor Thatcher joined the civil engineering staff of the New York Central Railroad in the maintenance of way department, where he remained until 1915. During the years 1915-1918 he was engaged with the Interstate Commerce Commission on a project dealing with the valuation of railroads. In 1918 he joined the Bethlehem Steel Company, Lackawanna Plant, as head of their civil engineering department, where he remained until 1924.

Cornell University called Professor Thatcher back to Ithaca as an instructor in 1924 to teach engineering law, engineering economics, engineering construction, and route surveying. His promotion to Assistant Professor came in 1926, to Associate Professor in 1942, and to Professor in 1946. He served in the School of Civil Engineering as the head of the Department of Engineering Management from 1946 until his retirement in 1953.

Professor Thatcher served on innumerable committees of the school, college, and university. He also served on the Board of Managers and Governors of Willard Straight Hall, as well as acting as consultant on various railroad investigations. He will be remembered for his help to the *Cornell Engineer* as a contributor and as a member of the Board of Advisors. During World War II he supervised war-training classes in seven New York State cities and was active in the development of Camp Atterbury, Columbus, Indiana.

Professor Thatcher faithfully served his country, his community, and his church. He was active for many years in the Boy Scouts as a committeeman and worked for the Ithaca Community Chest. The influence of his father, a Y.M.C.A. Secretary, was evident in his lifelong close association with the Presbyterian Church in which he held the office of Elder.

The associates of Professor Thatcher remember him for his devotion as a teacher, for his solid judgment, for his sound philosophical outlook, and for his calm and firm attitude. He took pride, in particular, in his effectiveness as a teacher. His teammates in bowling remember him as “anchorman” on University No. 1, in the Old Forest City League. An “anchorman” must be as steady as the name implies. It is believed that “Thatch” lived up to those specifications as closely as was humanly possible.

John C. Gebhard, John E. Perry, Taylor D. Lewis