

George William Jones

— *October 29, 1911*

We, the members of the University Faculty, desire to place on record a tribute of respect to the memory of an honored colleague, Professor George William Jones, a detailed appreciation of whose life and work was placed in our minutes on the occasion of his retirement from active service in 1907.

As a teacher he labored with unwearied patience and undivided loyalty to inculcate the best intellectual attainments of clear thinking, sound reasoning, and accurate exposition. His ideals were of the highest, and towards their realization he exacted of himself and of his students a whole-hearted devotion.

As a citizen he conceived nobly and enforced faithfully his obligations, in promoting charitable and philanthropic work, in efforts to improve the moral environment of the student, and in extending a helping hand to those in need of aid or encouragement.

To the bereaved family of our late associate and friend we express our warmest sympathy and regard.

Source: Records, p. 533, November 10, 1911

RETIREMENT STATEMENT

“On the retirement of Professor George William Jones from active participation in the work of the Cornell University Faculty after a distinguished service of thirty years, we the members of that faculty desire to place on record our high estimate of his worth as a teacher, a colleague and a man.

Joining the Department of Mathematics before the end of the first decade of its history, already a teacher of ripe experience, he bore an honorable part in the formative years, and during the still more critical period of rapid expansion which followed, in helping to shape those sound educational ideals which have prevailed in that department.

The influence of Professor Jones has been carried far beyond the bounds of the University both by his text-books and by the large number of successful teachers who have received at least part of their training in his class-room. Like many other sound mathematicians he has given much attention to the philosophy of the fundamental concepts, and to the pedagogical value of mathematical studies in a scheme of liberal education. Being a born teacher he

has always adapted himself easily to the capacity of his pupils. A master of the Socratic method, he would probe to the bottom of the student's knowledge by judicious questions, and then build on solid foundations. He has been wont to say that the mathematical class-room should be not merely a lecture room, but also a laboratory, a place for drill in applied logic. Many of his students have said that they received their first notion of what sound reasoning means from the searching and kindly criticism of Professor Jones.

The logical bent of his mind is well exemplified in his text-books of algebra and trigonometry, in which those subjects are each beaten out into a chain of carefully stated theorems and problems after the manner of Euclid's Geometry, there being never a word wasted and no long word used where a short one would do as well.

In matters of discipline Professor Jones has always shown a fine blending of firmness and kindness; and he has been helpful and friendly to all, both inside and outside the class-room. It will never be known how many scores of persons have gone to him each year for advice and guidance, and have been helped by him, pecuniarily and otherwise, his ready aid to the needy extending even beyond his means. His helpfulness is of a tonic quality, and he has no countenance for the shirk or the law-breaker until they show fruits of repentance. He is regarded by a long line of Cornell men and women as an embodiment of the manly Christian virtues, and by the people of Ithaca as a useful and public-spirited citizen.

Professor Jones has also been conscientious in attention to the business of the faculty, and he takes a deep interest in questions of educational policy. A man of well-poised judgment, he does his own thinking, and is not easily misled by high-sounding phrases that may make the worse appear the better reason. We shall long remember how he has been wont, in few but pregnant words, with old-fashioned courtesy, to express his earnest advocacy of whatever promotes good order and sound scholarship.

At all times and places he is an example of soldierly devotion to duty; a champion of good causes, however unpopular; a friend of the weak and friendless; an enemy of none but evil doers; and a wise helper of all who wish to live nobly. His work is not done, even at three score years and ten. May he stay with us long!

Source: Fac. Records, p. 389 6/18/07