William Tapley (1890-1950)

St. John's Law Review

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In August of this year Professor William Tapley, Chairman of
the Faculty Advisory Committee of the Law Review from 1942 to
1949, passed away.

Professor Tapley was educated at Dartmouth College from
which he received the B.S. degree in 1915 and New York Law
School where he received his LL.B. in 1917. He was admitted to
practice in New York State in 1920 and practiced before the trial
and appellate courts in New York State and the local Federal juris-
dictions.

After graduation from Dartmouth he taught in Framingham
Centre, Massachusetts, where he was acting head master and later
at Manual Training High School in Brooklyn. In 1925 he joined the
Law School faculty and was continuously associated with the school
from then on.

During World War I, Professor Tapley served in the United
States Navy and after the war was over he was active in veteran
affairs, serving as State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars
from 1923 to 1925.

At St. John’s Professor Tapley taught Contracts, Evidence, New
York Pleading & Practice and Constitutional Law. He contributed
scholarly articles to the Law Review including Vox Clamantis in
Deserto, 17 St. John’s L. Rev. 1 (1942); Is “Full Faith” Divorced
from Divorces, 17 St. John’s L. Rev. 87 (1943); and Jurisdiction
Based on Residence or “Open the Door, Richard,” 21 St. John’s L.
Rev. 135 (1947). During his service as Chairman of the Faculty
Advisory Committee of the Law Review, he did much to add to its
stature as a legal periodical particularly during the difficult years of
World War II.

Though a distinguished practicing lawyer and scholar, Professor
Tapley is best remembered as a teacher. His kindliness and quiet
demeanor endeared him to his faculty colleagues and students alike,
and gave to his classes a simple dignity, thoroughly in keeping with
the best traditions of the legal profession. In thousands of students
he inculcated a thorough knowledge of the law and more important,
a respect for the abiding principles of justice and morality. More
than anything else, he was a true teacher, and for that he will long
be remembered.
William Tapley