

JEFFERSON B. FORDHAM

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I know of no one in American legal education who has made a greater contribution to his law school than Jefferson B. Fordham.

He became dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1952. When he retires in the summer of 1970, he will have filled that post for eighteen years.

The University of Pennsylvania Law School has had a long history and a distinguished tradition. Many able persons have been its dean. Nevertheless, when Jefferson B. Fordham came to Philadelphia in 1952, there was much that needed to be done. It has been done, and there can be no doubt that the results achieved have been due largely to Fordham's imagination, industry, and spirit.

Most obviously noticeable is the complete rehabilitation of the school's physical plant. When Fordham took over the deanship, the school's quarters, once outstanding, were old, rundown, and inadequate. Its great library had outgrown its quarters. There were no living accommodations for students. Classrooms and office space did not meet modern requirements.

All of this has been changed. Of course, Dean Fordham did not do it all alone. He had the devoted and generous help of an extraordinarily loyal alumni body. But he provided much of the leadership and a large amount of the drive. It is perfectly true, of course, that education is not made by bricks and mortar. It is equally true that bricks and mortar do help the educational process greatly, and that the lack of adequate facilities can be a severe hindrance. The remedying of these problems during Dean Fordham's tenure has been an outstanding achievement.

Less obvious to the casual observer, but even more important, has been the role that Dean Fordham has played in rebuilding the faculty. The faculty has long been an outstanding one—but senior professors retire, and younger teachers become old. Faculties must constantly add new strengths if they are simply to maintain their standing. During Fordham's time the strengths have not only been maintained but increased.

To some extent, an institution is the lengthened shadow of a man. Under Fordham's leadership, the University of Pennsylvania Law School has been known to be a good place to teach and study law. It

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has been very lively, active, and productive. It has enlisted the services of able, young men, and has brought in experienced teachers to fill special needs. A remarkable factor has been the extraordinary loyalty which members of the faculty have shown to the school and to their dean. For the past many years, it has been extremely difficult to lure a Pennsylvania law teacher to another school. Visiting professorships have been accepted, but few of Dean Fordham's faculty have resisted the urge to return to 3400 Chestnut Street.

While Jefferson Fordham has been a remarkably able and successful dean, he has not confined his interests and activities to his school. He has been known on a wider front, as a leader not only in legal education, but also in many fields of public activity. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Commission on Constitutional Revision in 1958-59, and a member of the Presidential Advisory Panel on Ethics and Conflict of Interest in Government in 1961. Since 1968, he has been a member of the Administrative Conference of the United States. Perhaps his outstanding contribution has been in the field of civil liberties. It can fairly be said that it was through his vision and steadfast determination that the American Bar Association established a Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, and he was appropriately made its first chairman. Through this activity and otherwise, in a quiet but effectively forceful way, he has made his voice known, and it has been an important influence in an area in which progress is badly needed.

Much more could be said and written. Jefferson Fordham is a warm human being as well as a wise and able and effective legal educator and scholar. It is right and fitting that such tasks as his should, in due course, be turned over to a younger man. But we can all take satisfaction in observing what he has done, and in paying tribute to him for his accomplishments. If the younger generation can do better, that will be good. Surely it is appropriate to say that, for his time, Jefferson Fordham has been one of our outstanding legal educators, whose contribution not only at Pennsylvania but throughout the country will be felt for years to come.