

## Edwin Gardiner Weed Ruge - a Tribute

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## EDWIN GARDINER WEED RUGE

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### *A Tribute*

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By ROGER HOWELL\*

The REVIEW is dedicating this number to Professor Edwin Gardiner Weed Ruge, who retired from the full-time faculty in September, 1953, after twenty-eight years of teaching at the Law School, and now holds the rank of Professor Emeritus of Law.

On the opposite page there appears a photo-engraving of the portrait of Professor Ruge, which was presented to the School by the Class of 1953 and by his fellow members of the faculty at the Annual Law School Alumni Association Banquet in the Spring of 1953. The portrait was painted by Col. James P. Wharton, Professor of Art at the University of Maryland, College Park, and now hangs in the Lounge of the Law School building.

Professor Ruge was born at Appalachicola, Florida, in 1890, was graduated from Yale University in 1912 and from Harvard Law School in 1915. He practiced law in Atlanta, Georgia, from 1915 to 1917, and then served with distinction overseas in World War I as First Lieutenant and Captain of Infantry, being awarded the Purple Heart Medal and the Distinguished Service Cross. Later, he was a Major and Lieutenant-Colonel, Infantry, Reserve Corps.

After World War I he engaged for a while in business in Cleveland, Ohio, and then in 1922 entered law practice in New York City, in association with former Governor Nathan Miller of New York. In 1925 he joined the full-time faculty of the Law School as one of the first two full-time professors, and taught here until the time of his retirement,

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handling principally the course in Contracts in the Day division and the courses in Agency and Corporations in both the Day and Evening divisions.

The bare outline of his career gives little idea of the qualities of the man or of his lasting influence upon the School and upon the generation of law students who sat in his classes. Quiet and retiring, averse to publicity of any kind, he wished nothing except to teach and sought no reward except the knowledge of a task well done. That he was a truly great teacher in the very best sense of the term, many hundreds of his former students will attest. He brought to his classes his own insistence upon careful and meticulously accurate work, upon thorough preparation, upon clear and well-organized exposition; he would accept no compromise, no slipshod or equivocal answers, as satisfactory, as many a student discovered — to his sorrow perhaps, but to his lasting profit as well. Withal, he was a man of infinite patience — it was a rare thing when the end of his noon class did not see a crowd of students around his desk for perhaps another hour with questions that he would answer fully, patiently and courteously, no matter whether they were wise or foolish ones.

There is perhaps a tendency today to overestimate somewhat the influence of the teacher upon his students in matters where that influence is comparatively slight — to underestimate it in those things in which it is lasting and great. Professor Ruge brought to his students, not only his own high standards of work, but in his quiet way an example of personal courage, honor and integrity — characteristics so markedly his throughout his whole career. No student ever spoke of him except in terms in which the highest respect was combined with real affection; it was implicit even in the student nickname for him — the Little Colonel. The influence of such a teacher upon his students is beyond measure.

For the REVIEW, for the Law School, for his colleagues on the faculty, for all those who were his students and friends, this is to wish him long years of happiness in the retirement that he has earned so well.