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History of New Jersey Law School

October Fourth, 1908, in a small room in the Prudential Building, with but thirty students as a cornerstone, was laid the foundation of New Jersey Law School. It has since grown like a modern skyscraper, until now, we find it to be one of the largest and most outstanding law schools in the East.

This great edifice of Learning was made possible through the untiring efforts and most efficient work of its fathers, Richard D. Currier, Percival G. Barnard, and Charles M. Mason.

Mr. Currier is a native of Connecticut, has his B.A. degree from Yale, and carried off the J. G. B. prize at New York Law School, where he took the degree of Bachelor of Laws and was the honor man of his class.

Mr. Barnard, of Massachusetts, was graduated from Tufts College in 1896 and from Harvard Law School in 1903. He was honor man of his class at both institutions and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Mr. Mason, the first Dean of the school, was born in Mississippi. He received his preparatory education at New Jersey State Model School at Trenton. At Rutgers College and New York Law School, from which institutions Mr. Mason received degrees, he was awarded scholarships.

Imperium was given the new institution by the counsel and cooperation of such men as Frederick Frelinghuysen, LL.D., Honorable James E. Howell, former vice-chancellor of the Court of Chancery of the State of New Jersey, and Edward D. Duffield, former assistant attorney general of New Jersey and now president of the Prudential Insurance Company, who constituted the first advisory board.

In 1908, the opening year of the Law School, only two years were required to obtain a degree. In 1915 an additional year was added and now a student entering upon his legal studies must present credits equivalent to two years of college work in a recognized institution. Later the school adopted the Laws of 1912 which provided that: “No degree shall hereafter be granted by any institution within this State without the approval of the State Board of Education.”

The school purchased in 1908 an old homestead at 55 East Park Street, its present site. This purchase paved the way to a succession of new buildings and additions to meet the ever increasing demand for admission, and in January, 1916, title was obtained to 35 East Park Street. In conformity with a desire to raise the level of its entrance requirements and in order to increase the facilities afforded by the school, a pre-law department has been formed. The site selected was that occupied by the old Ballantine Brewery.

New Jersey Law School proudly boasts of a number of alumni who have achieved significant renown in community and state. Governor A. Harry Moore, of the Class of 1924, heads the list. Joseph F. S. Fitzpatrick, secretary of state, is of the same class; George Stiles Harris and H. Theodore Sorg are of the Classes of ’21 and ’12, respectively.

New Jersey Law School has the distinction of having had a graduate who was the first American lawyer to die in the World War. Lieutenant John Montieth, Jr., a graduate of the Class of ’16. The school contributed to the Gold Star list, Louis J. Cross, ’15; Wilber W. Jones, ’13; James V. Marzano, ’18, and Felix R. Smith, ’17.