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## ROBERT HASLEY WETTACH

HENRY BRANDIS, JR.\*

On August 29, 1964, Robert Hasley Wettach, a member of the law faculty since 1921 and Dean of the Law School from 1941 to 1949, departed this life on the wings of love.

Bob Wettach taught me when I was a first year law student, was a member of the committee which recommended my appointment to the faculty, became Dean the year after I joined the faculty, and was an invaluable member of the law faculty for the fifteen years I served as Dean. For almost thirty-seven years I cherished his friendship and felt toward him the deepest and warmest affection.

Distinguished as he was professionally, it is nevertheless his personal qualities which will keep bright his memory in the hearts of his colleagues, students, friends and acquaintances. In his face there shone such a glowing combination of strength of character, kindness and unwavering decency that it was a joy to look at him; and I am glad that, long before he died, I told him so.

Born in Pennsylvania, before coming to North Carolina he had earned four degrees at Pittsburgh and Harvard, practiced law briefly, and flown primitive Navy planes on anti-submarine patrol along the English Channel during World War I. The move to North Carolina proved to be his last one; and for forty-three years his situation was as is succinctly stated in the last line of his entry in *Who's Who in America*—"Home: Chapel Hill, N.C."

It was a home to be admired and envied. Here he and his wife, distinguished in her own right, reared three fine children in an atmosphere of mutual love, trust and respect which few family circles achieve. Equally, during his Deanship, his genius made it a privilege to belong to the professional family of the law faculty.

Wherever he undertook to serve he served faithfully, diligently and effectively—as teacher, scholar, author, educational administrator, visiting professor at a number of other schools, long-time Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University Press, Chairman of the Faculty, member of the Faculty Council and of

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countless committees, Alderman, director of a building and loan association, arbitrator, chairman of the commission which rewrote North Carolina's insurance statutes, and in many other capacities. His was indeed a life which enriched the lives of his fellow men.

His Deanship fell at a most difficult time, embracing as it did the years of World War II and its immediate aftermath, when the Law School's enrollment ranged from 13 to 288. He dealt with both student famine and student explosion with a calm and sure touch which greatly eased the strains of both and, remarkably, at the same time maintained and strengthened the professional standards of the School. No one I have ever known could have done better.

In terms of continuous membership, Bob Wettach was the senior man on this law faculty for three decades. This gave him a unique opportunity of which, through his superlative personal qualities, he took full advantage. And his heritage will continue to affect profoundly his surviving colleagues. Of this I am sure, because I have his old office; and there will be a continuing challenge, never successfully met, to grace it in the way he did.