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In Memoriam: Wilson Gesner Stapleton 1901-1979

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WALTER C. KELLEY*

Wilson Stapleton was a unique combination of scholar and politician. His scholarship was early manifested in Nova Scotian schools where he developed a life-long interest in English classical literature. Later in life as a teacher and a public official his prodigious memory of literary passages flowered his lectures and public addresses alike. He was proud of his intellectual capacity as demonstrated by his Phi Beta Kappa key, but more importantly, he enjoyed the pleasures of teaching and the stimulation of ideas, language and repartee.

The social and political sides of Bill Stapleton led him naturally into teaching, school administration and public service. He developed warm friendships among the high and the lowly, and enjoyed people both as individuals and in groups. He was an activist. As a law school administrator and as Mayor of Shaker Heights, Stapleton expected answers and solutions to problems from his staff and associates. He did not procrastinate in making decisions.

My first association with Bill Stapleton was when he, as Dean, asked me (a recent law school graduate) to teach Agency at Cleveland-Marshall Law School. It was a challenge, but typical of him. He enjoyed challenging students and associates, and he leaned toward the confidence side in dealing with others.

A few years later, he challenged me again when he, as Mayor of Shaker Heights, asked me to be his Director of Law. Functioning as legal adviser to a well-trained and experienced lawyer could be a hazardous occupation, but to Bill Stapleton's credit and my satisfaction, he never engaged in second-guessing in the field of municipal law. I could not have asked for a better boss, either at the Law School or at City Hall.

Others will comment upon Wilson Stapleton's many contributions to the Law School—in obtaining accreditation, in building up the library, in recruiting faculty, and in planning for future growth. His vision of the Law School as a school to provide quality legal education at reasonable costs primarily for Cleveland area students, has been built upon and carried out by those who have followed. He would be pleased by the Law School here at Cleveland State. The dedication of this issue to the memory of and in appreciation for the contributions of Wilson Stapleton is well-deserved.

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