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October 14, 1968

Being eighty years old is not bad, especially when one is surrounded by well-wishers. I arose early this morning, just at the time I was born, on Sunday morning, October 14, 1888. My mother always recalled the exact hour at which her eleven children were born and told me this after I was in the inquisitive age. For years I have somehow managed to be awake by five o'clock CST, as if to bid one year adieu and another all-hail. That is a bit sentimental, but I have been such a busy man that I have rarely taken time to do such childish things.

The death of Dr. Stickles removed the last of my early teachers. I was here the day he began his long career at Western, but it was two more years before I had him as a teacher. At our first chapel President Cherry introduced the new faculty: Stickles, Leiper, Clagett, Craig, V. O. Gilbert, Miss Mattye Reid, Miss Florence Ragland. Drs. Mutchler and Kinnaman had already been here since the school year 1906-1907. I can still recall just how Mr. Stickles looked, dapper, well-dressed, mustached. In the years of my student life, when we put on a Mock Chapel, we chose the handsomest student we could find to represent Mr. Stickles. And I think Mr. Stickles was always pleased at our fun-making at his expense, with some of his half-German, half-Eastern accents. Other old-timers, as you know, who were already here, were R. P. Green and Colonel J. M. Guilliams, who, with Mr. Gilbert, went elsewhere.

In all-fairness to the memory of our old-timers, I must say again that the reputation of Professors Kinnaman, Mutchler, and Stickles opened doors for us who attended Indiana University; that the solid teaching of these and Leiper made our further student days more acceptable to ourselves and our teachers. It was not an easy thing for our cross-roads school to break into the big places, and we who did the breaking in can never forget the advantage of some of our teachers' achievements in helping us on our initial break.

Dr. Stickles' doctoral thesis has been quoted over and over, by historians and novelists, for it also formed a basis for the famous novels that have been written about two principals in the court controversy, the famous or infamous Beauchamp-Sharp tragedy. Just a few weeks ago, while reading Wilford Fridy's thesis on Robert Pann Warren's use of Kentucky materials, I was impressed with the use of this doctoral dissertation for some of the facts behind the tragedy. His life of Simon Bolivar Buckner has also had a wide use among scholars and is basic to any serious study of Kentucky and her strange part in the Civil War. His history (with Mr. T. C. Cherry) of Kentucky is also referred to in many studies that concern Kentucky. For one man, in a semi-pioneer situation, this is a big achievement, especially when publication was such a hard thing to swing in those days, and to many people Normal School was almost a dirty word. Just because we were associated with a school for the training of teachers, what we did was suspect to start with.

The real monument to Mr. Stickles, as to any great teacher, is the achievement of his former students, many of whom have done exceedingly well in education, in law, in business, in politics, in the ministry. A Joe Robertson would be a rather big monument for a teacher if he were the only one. There was something histrionic about Mr. Stickles that always attracted attention. When he and I have been speakers on the same program out in the state, I watched the effect his very presence had on any audience, serious or just casual. Even the ones who knew the least about history and current events, listened attentively and tried to keep up with what was being said.

A side to Professor Stickles that few have ever known except some of us here was his family life. With Mrs. Stickles a bed-ridden invalid for a dozen years, Mr. Stickles had to arrange his life quite differently from what it otherwise would have been. He was a good neighbor, a

great booster of his young friends; a good jokester in a mild way, a man who, though apparently stand-offish, was warm-hearted and eager to be a part of things. He was not the type of man to whom you could tell a funny story and be sure that it was well taken; but he enjoyed a sort of intellectual humor, such as anecdotes about his absent-minded teacher and friend at Indiana, Dr. Hershey. He was full of quaint anecdotes about historical characters and loved to make wry remarks about some of the perversions of history that have emanated from would-be historians. He was very devoted to his children, who were born after he was a middle-aged man. I always felt that he loved Elizabeth the best, and there might have been some reason for this, for she always seemed a little more dependent than Harriet and was certainly more lovable to the rest of us. At Elizabeth's funeral he said to me: "I can never get accustomed to a world without Elizabeth." And we who heard him knew that he was telling a sad truth.

His own contemporaries were nearly all gone. He maintained a friendship with Judge John Rodes all his life here at Western; the judge is failing fast, I am told. He certainly knew Mr. A. M. Causey, Max Nahm, Will Sumpter, and others of the active old men who have so rapidly passed away. And our older faculty people, as you can see, are now gone, many of them twenty and thirty years ago. In a way it is sad to outlive one's own generation, to be, as Holmes remarked about his own long life, "the last leaf upon the tree," echoing his own words written, when he was a very young man, about a Revolutionary War veteran.