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9-6-2018

## Dickinson Law Alumni: Governors

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### Recommended Citation

Smith, Pamela G., "Dickinson Law Alumni: Governors" (2018). *Perspectives on Law School History*. 6.  
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## Dickinson Law Alumni: Governors

SEPTEMBER 6, 2018 BY [PAMELA G SMITH](#)

**185**  
YEARS  
1834 | 2019

**Andrew Gregg Curtin**, Pennsylvania's Civil War Governor, was a student of Judge John Reed, graduating from The Dickinson School of Law in 1837. Curtin was appointed Secretary of the Commonwealth and ex-officio Superintendent of Common Schools by Governor James Pollock. Curtin served as Governor of Pennsylvania from 1861-1867. Curtin was close friends with Abraham Lincoln, and he was known as "The Soldier's Friend" due to his efforts on behalf of the military. In 1869, Curtin was appointed by President Grant to be the United States Minister to Russia. He thereafter served three consecutive terms in Congress before retiring to his home in Bellefonte. Curtin was also one of the Law School's Incorporators.



Andrew Curtin



Alexander Ramsey

**Alexander Ramsey** was also a student of Judge Reed, graduating from The Dickinson School of Law in 1839. Ramsey was elected from Pennsylvania to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was appointed to serve as the first Governor of the Minnesota Territory. He was elected to serve as Governor after Minnesota achieved statehood. Ramsey resigned as Governor of Minnesota to serve as a U.S. Senator. Ramsey also served as Secretary of War under President Rutherford B. Hayes.

**Arthur H. James** was the son of a coal miner and worked as a breaker boy in the mine. He entered The Dickinson School of Law out of high school and graduated in 1904, as the youngest member of his class. His dream was to become District Attorney of Luzerne County, and he obtained this goal when he was elected to that position in 1919. In 1926, he resigned to run for Lieutenant Governor and won. In 1932, James was elected to the Superior Court. In 1938, James ran against another Dickinson Law graduate, Charles Alvin Jones, for the position of Governor and won. James served as governor of Pennsylvania from 1939 to 1943. In 1944, James was reappointed to the Superior Court due to a vacancy on that Court. After losing the election to retain that seat, James returned to Luzerne County to resume the practice of law.



Arthur James

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John Fine

**John S. Fine**, Class of 1914, also entered The Dickinson School of Law out of high school. Fine planned to do nothing more than practice law, and upon graduation, he did so in Wilkes Barre. However, at the urging of his father and friends, he entered the political arena and in 1927, he was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the bench for the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas. On June 17, 1947, Fine was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Superior Court. Fine resigned to run for Governor of Pennsylvania, and was elected to serve in 1950. In later years, Fine recalled a conversation that he had with Dean Trickett after graduation. Trickett asked Fine about his future plans, to which

Fine responded that he planned to return to Luzerne County to practice law. Trickett asked Fine if he had any plans to enter politics and when Fine responded, "no," Trickett told him that he would go far "if you stay out of politics." *Memories of Trickett Vivid*, Bill of Particulars, Vol. XV, No. 6 (July 30, 1971).

**David P. Buckson** is listed, but not pictured, as part of the class of 1948 in The Dickinson School of Law Yearbook. Buckson was a Judge for the Court of Common Pleas in the state of Delaware before becoming elected Lieutenant Governor of Delaware. He served as Governor for the state of Delaware from December 30, 1960 to January 17, 1961. Buckson was elected to the post of Attorney General for the state of Delaware in 1963 and served in that position until 1971. He was later appointed to serve as a Judge for the Delaware Family Court.

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Ridge at the Dedication of Ridge Commons, 2011

**Thomas J. Ridge** completed his first year at The Dickinson School of Law before being drafted into the United States Army to serve in the Vietnam War. He served as an infantry sergeant and returned as a decorated war hero to finish out his remaining two years, graduating from The Dickinson School of Law in 1972. Ridge served six terms in Congress before running for Governor of Pennsylvania. He was elected in 1994 and reelected in 1998. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Governor

Ridge was selected by President George W. Bush to be the first Director of the newly created Office of Homeland Security. When the Office of Homeland Security was elevated to the status of a cabinet-level Department, Ridge became the first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, where he remained until 2005. In 2011, the area of the Law School known as the Ridge Commons was dedicated in Ridge's honor, and the Tom and Laura Ridge Lobby, was dedicated by Ridge in honor of his parents. Ridge currently works in the private sector and remains a strong and valued supporter of the Law School.

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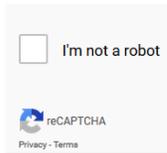


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