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Woolsack Honor Society

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Woolsack Honor Society

MARCH 21, 2019 BY [PAMELA G SMITH](#)

185
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The Woolsack Honor Society at The Dickinson School of Law was founded due to the efforts of J. Kennard Weaver, Class of 1920. In a letter dated March 10, 1923, Weaver described the formation of the Society:

I first learned of the Woolsack Honorary Society at a National Convention of my Fraternity held at Kansas City, Mo, during Christmas week of 1919. During this Convention, my room-mate at the Hotel in Kansas City was from Cornell University Law School,¹ and in exchanging gossip, regarding the two schools, Cornell and Dickinson, I asked him about a certain student who I knew was up there, and he spoke pretty highly of him and said he had made the Woolsack Senior Society, and when I asked him what the society was, he gave me the details and was very much surprised to learn that Dickinson had no senior honorary society to which a man be elected because of attaining certain scholastic requirements, being recommended by the Faculty. When I was at Pennsylvania University taking the Preliminary law course, I had known they had a senior honorary society to which a man worked during his first and second years in order to qualify. I felt at that time Dickinson should have such a society so that the men in the lower classes would have something to work toward.

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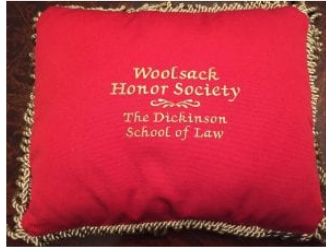
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I might say at this time the Woolsack is the sack of wool which has been used from time immemorial as the seat of the Lord Chancellor of England, and so represents the highest point of attainment in his profession for an Attorney in England, and it is for that reason that the members are called Chancellors.

Membership in the Woolsack is a reward of the finest scholastic work...

J. Kennard Weaver, *Letter to Peter Jurchak*, March 10, 1923.



In the early years of the Society's existence, members received a charm. At some point, however, the tradition began of presenting members with a red pillow to symbolize the actual Woolsack from which the Society derives its name.

For unknown reasons, the Woolsack Honor Society became dormant in the late 1930's. However, it was revived with the Class of 1981, and membership was awarded retroactively to prior classes. Membership in the [Woolsack Honor Society](#) is based on academic performance and recognizes senior class members who have earned a spot within the top 15% of their class.

¹ A letter dated April 20, 1978 from Cornell Law School indicates that the author was not able to find any evidence of a Woolsack Honor Society ever having been at Cornell Law School.

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