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*Judge Wilbur Fisk Sadler**

It is both appropriate and inspiring that this meeting should be held. We have foregathered here to take part in ceremonies in commemoration of the men who made the Dickinson School of Law possible. We are here to present to the Law School the gift of Dr. Horace Sadler, an incorporator of the Law School and Chairman of the Executive Committee, of four portraits of men distinguished in the annals of this institution. It is my privilege to speak of his father, the Honorable Wilbur Fisk Sadler, leading spirit of the group we honor.

Now that the scroll of his life has been written and its record closed, we may be permitted to look within and read of the virtues that adorned that life, and by recalling them, ever keep their memory green. Moreover, we are unwilling to permit the heedless generation of today to tread on the memories of one so near to us; and that they may escape oblivion's wrong, we can at least help perpetuate these recollections by placing in this institution, to which he gave in many ways so much, a portrait which reflects not only his likeness, but which to succeeding generations may be an inspiration to those who seek the path of success.

Wilbur Fisk Sadler was one of Cumberland County's most distinguished citizens. He was born at York Springs in Adams County, October 14, 1840, the son of Joshua and Harriet Sadler. His great-great-grandfather, Richard Sadler, came over from England in 1746, then or soon after pre-empting the land in Adams County where Wilbur Fisk

*This address was delivered in presenting to the Law School, on behalf of Dr. Horace Trickett Sadler, a portrait of the late Judge Wilbur Fisk Sadler.

Sadler was born. Not much is known of his very youthful days except that he worked on this farm. Later, the family moved into Cumberland County. He first attended school at the Academy in Centerville, and later he taught the little school at Burnt House. Each morning he walked eight miles to the school and the same distance in returning in the afternoon, receiving \$25.00 a month for his services. From these meagre earnings he managed to accumulate sufficient money to go through and graduate from Dickinson Seminary in Williamsport in the spring of 1863. While he was still at the Seminary in Williamsport, the Confederate forces had plunged far into southern Pennsylvania. Young Wilbur immediately enlisted as a volunteer in the Union cavalry, serving with troops until they were disbanded in the fall of 1863. He then took up the study of law in the office of Mr. Morrison of Williamsport, and was admitted to the Bar of Cumberland County in 1865. His early life was much like that of any other young man of his time. His boon companions were Dr. Trickett and Dr. Horn, and their hey-day as boys consisted in hiring a buggy each week and going to Wagner's Gap where they would box and wrestle. Imagine, if you will, Dr. Trickett and Judge Sadler as we knew them, boxing and wrestling, but no doubt it was just such exercise that formed the basis of a physical structure that carried him along for so many, many years. He married Miss Sarah Sterrett in 1871. From this union, four children were born: Wilbur Fisk, Jr., Lewis Sterrett, Sylvester Baker and Dr. Horace T. Sadler.

In choosing the profession of law as a career, Judge Sadler selected one that suited him. By industry, by indefatigable labor, and by carrying out the highest ideals of probity and honor in public and private life, he achieved a success in his profession. As a lawyer he united in a happy combination both theoretical knowledge and the practical shrewdness of the trial lawyer. His professional life was a busy one; always assiduous in his work, he belonged to that class of lawyers that combined civil and criminal practice and in such life he ran the gamut of

most human emotions and activities. He was a recognized leader of the Bar of the State as well as of the County, and possessed a profound knowledge of the law, displaying keen ability as a counsellor and pleader. He combined with his legal activities an aptitude for business affairs, and we find that he laid the foundation for many important projects that had much to do with the upbuilding of the Commonwealth. He devoted much time to building what are now State enterprises. He was the father of the West Penn Railway system, which was the chief factor in the building of the street railway from Greensburg to Pittsburgh, and also down what is familiarly known in Western Pennsylvania as the southwest branch. He was the projector of the Cumberland Valley Street Railway system. He was director and president of the Farmers Bank, and also served as a director of the First National Bank.

His busy life was marked by other important interests. It seems as if nothing could escape his encircling grasp. He found time to engage in civic enterprises, and led many popular movements for civic betterment. He regarded the science of politics as necessary to a finished education and found much time to engage in it. He was a candidate for the State Senate in 1868 on the Republican ticket, but was defeated. He was elected District Attorney of Cumberland County for the term of 1871-1874, but in 1873 was defeated as candidate for judge of this County by the Honorable Martin C. Herman. He retrieved this misfortune in 1883, for in that year he was elected President Judge of this County, in which capacity he served until 1894. Returning to the practice of law he achieved some of the success that we have mentioned. In 1903 he was again elected President Judge of the Common Pleas Court of Cumberland County, and as an indication of his popularity in 1883 he carried the County by 1325 votes, while the Republican nominee for President lost the county by 900 votes. He was twice a candidate for Supreme Court Judge and failed; that honor and the honor of succeeding him on the bench, after his term as President Judge expired in 1914, fell to his son Sylvester. Judge Sadler

died on July 4, 1920, at the age of 80 years and some months.

Judge Wilbur Fisk Sadler appears at his best as a judge, for though at times he may have appeared to be of an eccentric turn of mind, he seemed admirably equipped for this position. He was very fond of pipesmoking. He would take a recess, retire to his chambers, the old library, and indulge in this pastime. On one occasion, on returning to the bench, he put the pipe in his pocket, his clothing caught fire and being very much interested in the case he failed to notice it at first, but he soon discovered it when the heat struck his body. Court attendants quickly put out the flame. Judge Sadler's only thought was to caution them "Don't tell the boys," meaning his children, and court resumed as though nothing had happened. Indeed, his actions would at times rival Irvin S. Cobb's marvelous "Old Judge Priest," for the traits of character there exhibited were common to both.

As a man and a judge he always stood for the best and highest ideals of life. He was a man of strong convictions, never lacking in courage for their fearless expression. He was exceptionally broadminded; and though not often misled, no man was more susceptible to the call of charity. As a judge his intellectual processes were of the utmost candor and freedom. He always appreciated the learning and legal ability which he found in younger men, and was particularly helpful to them, more especially if they happened to be graduates of Dickinson School of Law. He was always proud of the achievements of those he had helped.

As himself a former student of the Dickinson School of Law, during the last years of Judge Sadler's first term on the bench, he graciously permitted all students to attend the sessions of court and imbibe some knowledge of practice, procedure and the law in general. Most of the students of that time availed themselves of the opportunity. It was a great treat to witness contests between such sterling characters as Judge R. M. Henderson, Judge M. C. Herman, Honorable J. W. Wetzel, Dr. William Trickett,

Honorable F. E. Beltzhoover and John Hays. These men were masters of their profession. Every kind of legal battle was fought out among them. Possibly the most celebrated homicide case which Judge Sadler ever tried, or at least so it seems to me, was the Salyard case, and the most notable civil case was a damage suit in which the Honorable Samuel P. Wolverton was on one side and Judge Herman on the other. Wolverton's reputation as a lawyer scarcely needs any comment even at this day. In these trials, it appeared to me, as a young man, that Judge Sadler presided with wonderful tact and ability. His judicial services lasted over a period of 20 years. Unfortunately, his legal utterances did not find their way into our reports as do those of the appellate court judges, and thus we have no lasting record of the strong elements of his legal knowledge, but his was a most notable career and reflects great credit not only upon himself but also upon the people of Cumberland County.

An eminent legal authority once remarked that the whole end and purpose of the English constitution—the point at which the converging aims of all its institutions meet—is to get twelve men together in a jury box. This was but another way of saying, in a somewhat striking manner, “that the entire structure of society as organized in a self-governing commonwealth, rests, for its fundamental basis, upon the proper administration of Justice.” Judge Sadler, in his administration of justice, always bore out these ideals. As a practitioner at the Bar or in his seat on the Bench, his most distinguished characteristic was his intense passion for justice. Often he swept aside technicalities of the law which though intended to promote justice, bore very heavily against an individual litigant—to secure what the judge believed to be justice in the particular case before him. His compassionate heart went out to the needy who were brought before him, to the poor and distressed. His love of justice and his desire to help stricken humanity guided many a helpless individual into a safe haven. His tender voice, his solicitous care, restored many a wrecked life and started it again on the path of peace and happiness.

Judge Sadler was a most unique and a most remarkable man. He set for his successors a lofty standard, and left an example which they might well emulate. He disdained riding on a wave of popular passion to strike at some helpless individual merely to secure applause, but if necessary turned against popular prejudice to aid the forlorn and distressed. On the other hand he invariably balanced justice to suit the conditions of the parties in the case, and never measured justice to secure expressions of approval from a group or set of people. One may search in vain through his judicial acts to place a finger on a single one whose integrity can be questioned.

We, however, know him best because of his connection with the Dickinson School of Law. When the Trustees of the College in 1890 decided to re-establish the Law School, the task was given to Doctor Trickett, who immediately went to his friend and counsellor, Judge Sadler, who then occupied the bench. Judge Sadler assisted in the work and became our first professor of criminal law. He afterwards taught practice. He took an intelligent and intense interest in the cause of legal education. As President of the Incorporators, he was associated with the Law School up to the time of his death, and had the fondest affection for the students of this institution. He always extended a helping hand to them, and we of the older alumni remember how he materially aided us in our admission to the Bar. He worked in harmony with the achievements of the men who graduated from Dickinson and who attained places of honor and distinction. His cheery smile was as a benediction to the tired or worried student. The crowning success of his life, in addition to the achievements of his children, was the completion of this Law School building.

These instances of high accomplishments remind us of our duty to the past. Judge Wilbur Fisk Sadler had a fine idealism at the core of his nature; it shaped and molded him and determined much of his life. He created his own philosophy of life and adhered to it with intelligent conviction. He gave to the Valley and to this School, the associa-

tion of his name and this we trust will live through his children until time's reckoning shall cause all things to fade away. Happily we have one of his sons still living with us, who is present today and who has so generously given us this fine portrait of his father.

And accordingly, Mr. President, I have the proud privilege, as a friend of the family, of presenting to the Dickinson School of Law this portrait of Judge Wilbur Fisk Sadler. I know that it will be received with high appreciation and gracious feeling, because of the noble character of the man whom it represents.

JOHN W. KEPHART.