Harry A. Bigelow
By Sheldon Tefft
James Parker Hall Professor of Law
The University of Chicago Law School

The Bigelow Professorship is named for Harry Augustus Bigelow, whose generous bequest has made it possible for the Board of Trustees to add another much-needed professorship to the Faculty of the Law School. Mr. Bigelow was the youngest of that small group of lawyers that William Rainey Harper brought to Chicago early in the twentieth century to establish its Law School. The School was only one year old when Mr. Bigelow joined the Faculty. He was then under thirty years of age and had been out of law school slightly more than four years. His experience as a teacher consisted of one semester as a part-time instructor in criminal law.

A native of Norwood, Massachusetts, Mr. Bigelow was a graduate of Harvard College, Class of 1896, where he had been elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and of the Harvard Law School, Class of 1899, where he had been an editor of the Harvard Law Review. After a brief period as a law clerk in a conveyancing office in Boston and as a part-time instructor in Criminal Law at Harvard, he had removed to Honolulu where he spent three very active years as a junior member of the Bar of the Hawaiian Islands. In January, 1904, Acting Dean Joseph H. Beale, Jr., who was then on leave from Harvard to help organize the new law school in the west, persuaded Mr. Bigelow to abandon the practice and join the Faculty at Chicago. There he spent the remainder of his life and for nearly half a century was an active member of the Law School Faculty.

The combination of an extremely acute analytical mind, unusual facility of lucid, succinct, lively presentation and a wide range of interests made Mr. Bigelow exceptionally well-qualified to teach. Within a short time he achieved and merited the reputation of being a most brilliant and gifted teacher. To sit in his classes was an experience highly prized by the students who developed a deep affection for him in spite of the terrifying intellectual chastisement which he frequently meted to those whose recitations were confused or slipshod. His reputation as a teacher and scholar was enhanced by the publication of his casebooks on The Law of Personal Property and The Law of Rights in Land. These soon became standard classroom materials and extended his influence to include a large proportion of the students in American law schools.

Though Mr. Bigelow was a superb master of the case method of instruction, he early recognized that in some areas it was so cumbersome and time-consuming as to be ineffective. Furthermore, his experience indicated that investigations of legal questions that were limited to the materials in the law reports were often sterile. At a

Gilmore Appointed to Bigelow Chair

The School takes great pleasure in announcing that the President of the University has designated Professor Grant Gilmore as the first Harry A. Bigelow Professor of Law.

Born in Boston in 1910, Grant Gilmore received an A.B. in 1931, and a Ph.D. in Romance Languages in 1936, both from Yale University. Following three years as a teacher of French at Yale, he entered the Yale Law School, and was awarded the LL.B. in 1942. He practiced law in New York City, and served in the Office of the General Counsel of the Navy Department, before returning to New Haven to begin his career in law teaching and legal scholarship.

Professor Gilmore taught at Yale for nineteen years, before becoming a member of the Faculty of the University of Chicago Law School in 1965. During that period he was a Visiting Professor at Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia and Harvard, and at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies.

In 1966, as previously noted in the Record, Professor Gilmore received the James Barr Ames Prize for his two volume work, Security Interests in Personal Property. He is also the author, with Charles Black, of The Law of Admiralty.

We call to the reader’s attention Professor Sheldon Tefft’s admirable memoir of Dean Bigelow, which appears nearby.

time when it was fashionable to believe that textbooks in the hands of students were pernicious, he published his Introduction to the Law of Real Property, a brief historical introduction that has proved to be an invaluable tool for the student of the modern land law.

Mr. Bigelow realized that an effective understanding of law frequently requires the study of subjects that, traditionally, have been excluded from law schools. Under his leadership the curriculum at Chicago was expanded to include subjects such as accounting, economics and psychology. He also encouraged the faculty to pioneer in the development of a program of tutorial instruction that has greatly enriched the training that the school affords its students and has been widely copied by American law schools.

When the American Law Institute was organized, Mr. Bigelow rendered distinguished assistance with the preparation of the Restatement of the Conflict of Laws and the Restatement of the Law of Property of which he was, originally, the Reporter. After the untimely death of James Parker Hall in 1928, the University selected Mr. Bigelow as second Dean of the Law School. He was also designated as the first John P. Wilson Professor.

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rupture of Insull Utility Investments, Inc. In the liquidation of that enterprise his acumen and sound practical judgment commanded the respect and admiration of businessmen and lawyers alike, many of whom were much surprised that a professor could master even the most intricate problems of that very complicated business organization.

When Mr. Bigelow reached the University’s retirement age in 1939, he relinquished the Deanship, but, though emeritus, continued to teach classes in Conflict of Laws and in Property. In 1947, he was drafted by President Harry S. Truman to be a member of the National Loyalty Review Board and to the work of that agency he devoted much time and energy during the last years of his life. One who does not have access to the files of the Board cannot, of course, know how invaluable to the nation were his services, but no one who knew how preeminent were his qualifications for the difficult and extremely sensitive work of that agency could fail to be thankful that, in spite of his failing health, Mr. Bigelow had accepted the appointment.

The service that he rendered to the nation as a member of the Loyalty Board was a fitting climax to Mr. Bigelow’s career, and when added to his contributions to his students, to the Law School to which he had devoted forty-six years, and to the profession at large, will merit eternal gratitude and always inspire those who were privileged to be associated with him.

It is particularly appropriate that the professorship which Mr. Bigelow’s bequest sustains should bear his name. For it will serve as a perpetual memorial of a lifetime of eminently distinguished teaching and scholarship that encompassed substantially all of the first half-century of the School’s existence, and contributed so brilliantly toward the realization of Mr. Harper’s goal that the new Law School of The University of Chicago should be worthy of a place in the great institution he envisaged.

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as Medicare and public housing as embodying major issues of public policy when, in fact, they involved only issues of method and administration. But only politicians, by and large, seemed to take seriously their own continuing debate over the essential necessity for government’s assumption of broad responsibility for the general welfare.

Not all the demands of social responsibility, of course, have yet been met. Crime, juvenile delinquency, structural unemployment, bad housing, racial discrimination, the urban ghetto—these are deeply disturbing and stubbornly resistant manifestations of our continuing failures. There is good reason to hope, nevertheless, that they will eventually yield to massive applications of techniques and resources we now know how to use. The problem, essentially, is to find ways—especially in a period of limited but large-scale war—of making such applications massive enough.

Meanwhile, a new crisis has emerged. Compounded of population growth, technological change, mass communications, and big government, it is a crisis of identity—a crisis characterized by the progressive submergence of a sense of individual significance in a gray, featureless sea of homogenized humanity. And though it is a crisis characterized rather by a sense of vague anxiety and unease than by misery and pain, it is serious nonetheless for a society dedicated from its outset to the liberation of human aspirations and the fulfillment of human potential. It is serious because it portends the failure of that society in serving these ends. And since the processes which are blurring the individual’s belief in himself are progressive and inexorable, it is hard to shake off a sense of impending decay and gathering darkness.

But even the gloomiest forecast can be useful in identifying a challenge—or so, at any rate, “the optimists and chronic hopers of the world,” as Mencken called us, are bound to believe. As I see the challenge, it is to maintain, create and, where necessary and possible, to restore, an environment for living which, first, is physically safe; second, provides aesthetic satisfaction; third, encourages the maximum development of human capacities; fourth, gives scope for the development of personal relationships in which the need for affection, mutual respect, and the recognition of individual dignity can be satisfied; and fifth, affords opportunity for the individual to play a meaningful part in the shaping of the policies and programs directed toward the four preceding goals.

Now, if I were giving five lectures instead of one (and, mind you, this is not a complaint because there is no conceivable prospect that I could have prepared more than one), I would cheerfully dilate on all of these themes. Indeed, as you know, my present responsibilities are largely concerned with some of the aspects of public safety. As to aesthetic satisfaction, I have long felt that if I could choose any job in the world it would be that of

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