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Dean O. H. Thormodsgard

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COMMENDATION

Olaf H. Thormodsgard is a native son of North Dakota. He was born in Carrington, North Dakota, September 15, 1891, to Halvor O. and Andrea (Gunnarson) Thormodsgard. The central and western Dakotas were then sparsely settled pioneer territory in which Olaf's father served as a Lutheran minister. Many pioneer ministers were itinerant, serving several widely separated congregations. Reverend Thormodsgard was one of these and travelled about a great deal. For that reason some of Olaf's youthful years were spent in South Dakota. Early in his teens he went to the State of Washington where he continued his scholastic training and was graduated from Spokane College in 1913 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Thereafter young Olaf Thormodsgard returned to the mid-west and took postgraduate work at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, where he received his Master of Arts Degree in 1916. In 1916 and 1917 he was engaged as instructor in the Fergus Falls, Minnesota, High School. He had served in the Washington National Guard during the years 1910 to 1913 and was overseas as a member of the 91st Division of the American Expeditionary Forces in 1918 and 1919. In 1918 he was awarded the French Medalle d'Honneur des Epidemie. After the war ended he was Professor of Economics at St. Olaf College for several years, and in 1923, he received the degree of Juris Doctor from the University of Chicago School of Law. Shortly thereafter the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace awarded him a fellowship at the Harvard University School of Law, where he devoted his time during the next year to the study of international law, a subject in which he came to be considered an expert.

Thus equipped and qualified by study and experience, in 1926 Mr. Thormodsgard came to the Law School of the University of North Dakota as Associate Professor of Law. He occupied that position until 1929, when he became Professor of Law and Acting Dean of the school. In 1933 he was appointed to the position of Dean, which he has since held with notable distinction. Under his wise leadership the Law School of the University of North Dakota attained an enviable standing and reputation.

During his long service at the Law School, Dean Thormodsgard has performed all duties devolving upon him with fidelity

COMMENDATION

and notable success. But he has not confined his activities to the Law School. He has been active as well in outside professional affairs. Admitted to the Bars of North Dakota and of Minnesota, he is an esteemed member of the American Bar Association and the North Dakota and Minnesota Bar Associations, and of the North Dakota Judicial Council. He is a member of the Commission on Uniform State Laws (for North Dakota), and chairman of the Legal Education and Admission Committee of the North Dakota State Bar Association. In all of these organizations he has been a leader, and by his wise counsel and active participation has made a worthwhile contribution to the jurisprudence of our state and nation.

Dean Thormodsgard has not confined his interest and labors to purely legal affairs. He is an active member of his church, of the American Legion, and of the Masonic Lodge. He has been ever ready to undertake and do his part in any worthy civic enterprise and has established for himself an enviable position as an outstanding citizen.

The University of North Dakota has been fortunate indeed in securing and retaining Dean Thormodsgard as a member of its faculty. He has been a most efficient administrator. He accomplished the impossible during the hard years when the means afforded the Law School were indeed scanty. Patient, kindly, and sympathetic, he has gained and kept the regard and cooperation of his associates. He has won not only the respect of those under his direction as students of the law, but also their regard for him as a mentor and friend.

W. L. NUSSLE, Chief Justice
North Dakota Supreme Court