

## RICHARD HENRY CLOYD

By John E. Luttrell\*

Few men in a long and active life have given as much service to their community, state and country, as did Richard H. Cloyd. Born August 9, 1891, in the "Volunteer State" of Tennessee and one of seven children, he moved with his parents, Henry and Lucy Cloyd, to Western Oklahoma in the early 1900's.

In his youth he learned these lessons of industry, integrity and moral and intellectual honesty which characterized his later life. He was graduated from Southwestern State Teachers College at Weatherford and immediately thereafter became principal of Cordell High School. He also taught at Granite. 1914 and 1915 he taught in Lone Wolf High School, being made Superintendent there in 1915. While at Lone Wolf he met and courted Agnes M. Chase, a music teacher in that school, and they were married December 4, 1917. They had one daughter, Dorothy, now Mrs. Tom P. McAdams, Jr. Both his wife and daughter survive him.

He entered Oklahoma University in 1917, working after classes to help pay his way through college. While an undergraduate, Dick, as all his friends knew him, was initiated into Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and served one year as President of the Oklahoma University chapter.

When World War I came along, he enlisted in the army as a private and was honorably discharged with the rank of Lieutenant. After being discharged from the army he returned to Oklahoma University and finished the requirements for his Bachelor's degree. He became the first full time Secretary of the Alumni Association of the University of Oklahoma which position he filled from 1926 to 1932. During his term as Secretary, he led the drive to construct the Union and Stadium. After stepping down as Secretary, he served several years as a Trustee and Secretary of the Union-Stadium Fund Drive.

While Secretary of the Alumni Association, he attended the College of Law of the University of Oklahoma, and received his Law Degree in 1928. He earned, and there was conferred upon him, the Order of the Coil, the highest law school academic honor which can be attained by a student in the Law School.

While attending the College of Law he was appointed Province President of Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity. He became national president for a longer period of time than any other

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**Richard Henry Cloyd**

international President of Phi Delta Phi, which organization was always dear to his heart. He served Phi Delta Phi as its interman, from 1941 until 1947. After his retirement as President he continued to be parliamentarian of the organization and his long service to it as an officer and as parliamentarian endeared him to the hearts of many young delegates to the International Conventions who rewarded his warmth and friendship with genuine affection.

He served the City of Norman as one of its City Commissioners two terms and was elected Mayor and served two years. He was a representative in the State Legislature from Cleveland County six years and in the following session was made Clerk of the House of Representatives.

He was again ordered to active duty with the army on September 18, 1940, with the 45th division, and served with the 45th until transferred to the 8th Corp Area Headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He became a Lieutenant-Colonel in 1942 and a full Colonel in 1944 and was retired in 1951. Immediately after his retirement he began work as Assistant Chief Attorney in the Oklahoma City office of the Veterans Administration. He served there until 1955 when he was transferred to the Muskogee Veterans Administration office as General Attorney and opinion writer. In August of 1961 he retired from the Veterans Administration and shortly thereafter returned to his old home town of Norman and was appointed Judge of the City Court, which position he held until the time of his death, on December 7, 1964. He was a life member of Oklahoma Historical Society and served as a member of its Board of Directors from May 27, 1963 until his death. Burial was in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery at Norman, Oklahoma.

During a long and active life he made many friends among men and women of prominent position as well as those in the humbler walks of life. He counted among his friends legislators, governors, members of Congress and Captains of Industry as well as the grocer, the barber, and all others with whom he came in contact. In extending his friendship to others he made no distinction between men of prominence and the common man. True worth, to him, did not depend upon wealth or position. He loved people for themselves and whether a man or woman was of wealth, political or social prominence, made no difference to him in his estimate of their worth. He had few enemies and many, many friends.

In the performance of his duties, both with the Veterans Administration, and as Judge, many persons came before him unfamiliar with such surroundings and were in awe of the man's desire and purpose to find and be guided by the truth, quickly

who was to hear and decide their cause. His warmth and evident relief relieved any such awe or embarrassment. Young lawyers appearing before him were the object of his special solicitude. The fact that they were not as familiar with trial procedures as their opponents was understood and his guiding hand assisted them in the presentation of their case. His purpose was to do justice between man and man, and not to decide the matter on the relative ability of contending lawyers.

His domestic life was one of devotion and attachment to his wife and daughter and when his daily chore was completed he could always be found at home in the companionship of his family. "In him . . . life was gentle; and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: This was a man."

Our life on earth is but a short interlude between two eternities. Our knowledge of the one past, consists of our own experiences and what we learn from recorded history. The eternity beyond this life rests in our hope of life hereafter and faith in God that that hope will be fulfilled.

He whose memory we honor here lived in the belief and faith that man's sojourn here on earth is not the end, but that there is immortality of the soul and life hereafter for those who believe in God, and that for those who live and die in that faith "there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

In the Bible we find this solemn admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whatever task was his he did promptly, thoroughly, and efficiently. He was a perfectionist and was never satisfied with mediocrity. When he put his hand to the plow he looked straight ahead, plowed a straight furrow and did not look back. He revered the past and was grateful for the many friends he had made in his long career of public service, but he lived for the future; what it held for him, those he loved and his country. He was a man of strong convictions and with strict adherence to principle and followed, always, the dictates of his own conscience, and not the opinion of the multitude. Though a man of strong conviction and adherence to principle, he was not intolerant of the views of his fellowman.

He lived by the principle that all men are equal before the law and as a lawyer and judge he brooked no distinction by reason of social position, wealth, race or creed. Loyalty and gratitude were among his great virtues; he never forgot nor failed to be grateful for a kindness conferred upon him. It was my great privilege to have him as my friend and be his friend for more than forty years.