
John Ritchie, Ex-nu Law School Dean

March 10, 1988|By Kenan Heise.

John Ritchie, 83, a retired Northwestern University Law School professor, served as that school's dean from 1957 to 1972.

Mr. Ritchie, a native of Norfolk, Va., received his college and law school degrees from the University of Virginia, where he was Phi Beta Kappa and made a member of the Order of the Coif, a legal honorary fraternity.

Those two memberships represented the two highest scholastic honors he could have been awarded at the school.

He then received a doctorate in law from Yale University and later was given an honorary doctorate by William and Mary College.

During World War II, he was staff judge advocate for the Army's 65th Infantry Division. He held the rank of colonel.

He practiced law briefly in Nebraska but returned to his alma mater to teach.

He then served successively as law school dean at Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Wisconsin and Northwestern University.

After retiring at Northwestern, he returned to the University of Virginia to teach. At Northwestern, he helped initiate a first-in-the-nation "one-stop" program to provide free medical, dental, social and legal services for the indigent at Northwestern University medical and dental clinics.

He also was involved in setting up, in 1965, the first public defender program in a federal court.

Mr. Ritchie was Tucker lecturer at Washington and Lee University in 1964 and DeTocqueville lecturer at Marquette University in 1967.

He served as national president of the Order of the Coif, president of the Association of American Law Schools and president of the Judge Advocates Association.

He was a member of the Illinois Judicial Advisory Council and of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

He served on the editorial board of the Foundation Press.

Survivors include his wife, Sarah; two sons, John Jr. and Albert; and four grandchildren.

