

EDWARD TUCKER SEAY:

EDWARD TUCKER SEAY died at his home on Richland Avenue in Nashville on the evening of August 19th, 1941. He had for a year or more been largely confined to the house on account of failing health, but had more recently recovered enough to make occasional visits to his office.

Mr. Seay was born in Hartsville on October 15th, 1868, but removed with his family in early life to Gallatin, where he resided until he came down to Nashville in 1907. He was the son of George E. and Mary Jane Lauderdale Seay. His father, himself a distinguished lawyer, was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1870, and thereafter for nearly twenty years Chancellor of the Chancery Division in which he lived.

Mr. Seay's first professional connection, after graduating in law from Vanderbilt University and being admitted to the Bar in 1891, was with his father's law firm of Dismukes and Seay at Gallatin; and while still a resident of Gallatin he was three times elected to the State Senate - in 1899, 1901 and 1903 - and in his two latter terms chosen to be the Speaker.

His father's firm in Gallatin were the attorneys for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in that vicinity, and Mr. Seay took an active part in that representation. His industry and his capacity did not escape the notice of the road's Legal Department, and in 1907 he was offered and accepted the position of Assistant District Attorney for Middle and West Tennessee. He then removed to Nashville and formed an association with the District Attorney, the late John Bell Keeble, under the firm name of Keeble & Seay, and this association continued until Mr. Keeble's death in 1929, at which time Mr. Seay was made District Attorney of the Road, an office that he held up until his death.

Another connection that continued through many years of his life and that he greatly cherished was that with Vanderbilt University. When he came from Gallatin to Nashville in 1907 he began teaching in the Law School - a service that he continued to render for many years; and for a short time he succeeded his partner, Mr. Keeble, on the latter's death in 1929, as Dean of the School. In 1937 he was chosen to the Board of Trust of the University, a position of honor that he likewise held until his death.

Mr. Seay was an active member of the Vine Street Christian Church, holding many offices in the Church Organization, and for a number of years he taught the Men's Bible Class at the First Presbyterian Church. He was not only a lawyer of outstanding ability but was equally recognized for his high scholarship and his sound business judgment. Besides being a member of the Vanderbilt Board he held memberships in the Boards of Fisk University and the National Life & Accident Insurance Company. And there was probably no connection outside of his family and his profession that he more enjoyed than his participation in the reviews and discussions of the Round Table.

He was a thirty-second degree Mason, a Shriner, a Knight of Pythias, a member of the Belle Meade Country Club, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and the Nashville, the Tennessee, and the American Bar Associations. On several occasions he sat as a Special Judge on the Supreme Court and on the Court of Appeals of Tennessee. During the last twelve years he was the senior member of the law firm of Seay, Stockell & Edwards, having as his law associates Albert W. Stockell and J. Connelly Edwards; and among the many important cases in which he participated were the Magevney Will Case in 167 Tennessee, and the Scopes Case in 154 Tennessee.

It will be apparent from this brief notice of Mr. Seay's connections and activities that he was a man of wide interests and of great versatility, and that he was not only distinguished professionally, socially and intellectually but also as a good and useful citizen and with a deep spiritual side to his nature.

Perhaps Mr. Seay's greatest service, and his most congenial one, was as a law teacher. It was a service that was peculiarly suited to his talents and to his tastes. His longest association in this service was with Thomas H. Malone, Jr., to whose life and memory this Bar paid tribute just a few months ago. They were not only close friends from college days, but were survivors of that diminishing number of law teachers who are at the same time engaged in the active practice of the law, and it is something of a coincidence that they should have died so near together.

Mr. Seay was a charming companion with unusual qualities of gentleness and wit. He had a great fund of anecdote and was brilliant - and dangerous - at repartee; but even in the heat of debate he never gave offense or acted under impulse. His fault - a generous one - was that in his service to his clients he too little spared himself. One of the Nashville papers said of him very truly: "He was at all times a respected opponent but at the same time a courteous and gentle one. He was modest in all things and he maintained the common touch. In any company he was completely at home."

Mr. Seay is survived by his wife, Mrs. Polly Barr Seay, and by two daughters, Mrs. J. Connelly Edwards and Miss Katherine L. Seay, and by a granddaughter, Mrs. Polly Barr Burkholder, to whom and to his surviving sisters and brother the lawyers of Nashville, some of whom knew him long and well, and many of whom sat under him as students, extend their deep sympathy.

(Signed) Albert W. Stockell,
Miller Manier,
Albert G. Ewing,
Walton Whitwell,
John K. Maddin,
Thomas H. Malone, III,
Charles C. Trabue, Chairman.
