

ROBERT TRIMBLE SMITH

Robert Trimble Smith was born on April 16, 1865, and died on October 27, 1929. He was born in Nashville and lived his whole life here and he is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery. He derived his name from both his father, Robert McPhail Smith, and his mother, Letitia Trimble. He must have felt that unconscious inclination a youth so often feels to follow in the steps his forbears had trod. He had a distinguished legal heritage. His great grandfather, James Trimble, was United States Attorney at Knoxville under President Jefferson, and a noted land lawyer. After he removed to Nashville a rather notable group of young men read law in his office, including Col. Montgomery, who led the charge and was killed at Horseshoe Bend, Sam Houston, afterward Governor of two States, and Aaron V. Brown, Governor of Tennessee and Postmaster-General under President Buchanan.

Mr. Smith's grandfather, John Trimble, was a member of the Nashville Bar, prosecuting attorney of Davidson County, and later United States Attorney, and his father, a man of learning in many fields, was a distinguished and successful member of this Bar within the memory of many now living, and was for a number of years an honored member of the Vanderbilt law faculty.

Robert Trimble Smith was a student for two years in the academic department of Vanderbilt University and graduated from the law school of the university with Founder's medal in 1886. He was an active member of the bar from 1892 until failing health required him to withdraw before his death. He was justly regarded as the highest authority at the local bar on the law of real estate, and on several occasions he served as special Chancellor. He was especially devoted to the interests of Vanderbilt University and for some years before his death he served by the choice of the alumni as one of the Board of Trust of the University and was a useful member of its executive committee. During the Great War he was Chairman of War Exemption Board No. 2 of Nashville, and was later promoted to be a member of the Industrial Exemption Board of Tennessee.

He was a member of Christ Church of Nashville, of which his grandfather on his father's side, Rev. Leondias L. Smith, was a rector during the Civil War.

Mr. Smith was a man of quiet demeanor, a wide reader, learned in the law, and, above all things, dependable. He formed his own opinions carefully and with moderation and then pursued the course that his judgment approved. He was social in his habits and had a strong sense of humor. He did nothing rashly or without deliberation. He did not allow his inclinations to affect his judgment, and he was, therefore, a safe and wise adviser of his clients.

He was the oldest of eight brothers, all men of ability and some of distinction and who were bound very closely to one another, and it was his great pleasure at intervals to visit in the families of those who lived away from Nashville.

He had the fullest confidence of the Courts and of his fellow lawyers. He was Honorable alike in his private as well as his professional life, and everything he did was with him a matter of confidence. He left a fine example in this respect for younger lawyers to follow. We like to think of the law as an honorable calling whose members are entitled by their integrity of thought as well as conduct to the trust and confidence of those who come to them for help and advice. Mr. Smith was such a lawyer.

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