

In Memoriam: James Oliver Murdock

James Oliver Murdock, a former chairman of the ABA Section of International Law, died on December 20, 1981, in Silver Spring, Maryland, at the age of 88 years. A number of Jim's friends and colleagues in the Washington area attended a memorial service for him at St. John's Episcopal Church, Georgetown, in the Chapel of the Carpenters on December 28.

A professor emeritus of law at George Washington University, a former legal adviser and consultant at the U.S. Department of State, a former member of the Inter-American Juridical Committee of the Organization of American States, and a wounded veteran of World War I, Jim Murdock was truly a gentleman, scholar, and patriot. Indeed, his passing is not unlike the falling of a splendid, sturdy, and solid oak in the forest of our times, and his memory will linger long in the minds and hearts of those who knew him.

Jim was born in Wichita, Kansas, and grew up in Texas and Mexico. After graduation from the University of Chicago, where he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta social fraternity, Jim served in the Army (field artillery) during World War I. He was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds sustained in France. Although one would never know it from his always pleasant, enthusiastic demeanor, Jim was never entirely free from the pain caused by those battle wounds (loss of both heels).

In 1924, Jim graduated from the Harvard Law School and became an assistant to the U.S. Attorney in New York City. Moving to Washington, D.C., in 1927, he served as an attorney adviser with the State Department until 1936, when he entered private practice. In 1945, after having served as a part-time law professor at George Washington University for a number of years, he became a full-time member of the faculty, teaching international and comparative law. He was named a professor emeritus in 1958, when he returned to the State Department as a special consultant on inter-American affairs, and he also served on the Inter-American Juridical Committee until the late 1960s.

A naturally friendly and congenial person, Jim was also a vigorous thinker and man of action, never flinching from taking a position on the questions of his day. Moreover, his enthusiasm and innovative bent took root in the American Society of International Law, which he served for a time as treasurer, and the Washington Foreign Law Society, of which he was a co-founder. Jim's wife, the former Elizabeth Lea, died in 1966, but his survivors include two sons, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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We shall miss the probing intellect and benevolent character and spirit of James Oliver Murdock. However, his interest and concern and affection for the rule of law internationally is forever enshrined in the institutions of the law that he did so much to nurture and help develop, as well as in the hearts of his friends and colleagues.

DONALD K. DUVALL