

## NECROLOGIES

### CHARLES WILLIAM KERR

#### 1875—1951

Charles William Kerr, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Kerr, was born in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, on April 2, 1875 and died in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on July 18, 1951.

He spent his youth in Slippery Rock and attended the public schools and graduated from the State Normal School there in 1893. He soon moved to Parker's Landing where he taught school for two years, and studied under Dr. J. Walker Miller, pastor of the Presbyterian Church. In 1895 he entered Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. He transferred in 1897 to McCormick Seminary in Chicago, for his senior year. After graduating in May, 1898, he went to Edmond, Oklahoma Territory, as pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He was married to Miss Annie Elizabeth Coe of Parker, Pennsylvania on September 6, 1898.

In February, 1900, he was called to Tulsa, Indian Territory, as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church that had less than one hundred members, over half of whom were Indians. The Presbyterian Home Mission Board paid \$375 of his \$800 salary at first but the church became self-supporting in 1904. It grew with the city, becoming one of the largest churches in the Presbyterian denomination. Dr. Kerr served with distinction, as its pastor in Tulsa until April, 1941, when he became Pastor Emeritus.

Dr. Kerr was a builder, not only of things spiritual for under his pastorate a new church building was erected on the corner of 7th and Boston Avenue in 1909; and in 1925, the addition of the beautiful auditorium was completed. Under his ministry four new Presbyterian churches were organized in Tulsa.

Always a busy man, Dr. Kerr ministering to his growing church and to need whenever and wherever he found it, in tents, in covered wagons, in the hills, or on the prairies of the surrounding country. With sympathetic understanding for anyone in need or distress, he was ready to render every service possible. As President and Manager of Tulsa's first chartered hospital, the writer had occasion to observe Dr. Kerr in many of his ministrations of mercy. He was the first to arrive to care for members of his own church, or for anyone in need of his ministrations.

From the beginning of his pastorate in Tulsa as a young man in Tulsa, he found time from the regular churchly duties to visit shut-ins, invalids and the elderly people of the community. His kindly interest in them coupled with his genial personality brought to many comfort and renewed interest in life. When any parishioner suffered a loss there were always visits and letters of condolence to comfort.

One example of Dr. Kerr's compassionate love and service is shown in an incident which happened in 1901. In February of that year, a friend and minister who was a guest in his home became ill with smallpox. The attending physician prescribed quarantine quarters, but Dr. and Mrs. Kerr had the patient remain in their home for better care. All of them were quarantined, but the sick man was nursed and cared for until his recovery. Instances like this could be related in multiple for all through the years for he was always serving others. During the Negro riot in 1923,

Dr. Kerr opened the doors of his church for shelter and comfort to several hundred Negro women and children, until arrangements could be made for their safety. In World War II, Dr. Kerr kept in personal touch with the 584 Service Men and Women of the church. Once each quarter letters of city, church, and personal interest were sent every one of them.

After his resignation as pastor in 1941, he became Chaplain of Hillcrest Memorial Hospital and continued that work until 1950 when he suffered a disabling illness. Dr. Kerr was a Tulsa Booster and Builder. He was one of the men who helped bring Kendall College to Tulsa in 1907. This College later became the University of Tulsa, and Dr. Kerr was an active trustee of the institution for forty-three years. When he resigned because of ill health he was made an Honorary Trustee.

His influence was felt not only in his beloved Oklahoma but throughout the Nation. In 1923, Dr. Kerr was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. He was a member of the General Council of the Presbyterian Church and various other Boards and Committees. He is listed as an honoree in the Hall of Fame of Oklahoma, and his biography is in *Who's Who in America*. In Tulsa, he was an active member of Y.M.C.A., The Commercial Club which later was the Chamber of Commerce, the Pioneer Association, The Rotary Club, the Tulsa Club, the Knife and Fork Club, an Honorary member of Pi Gamma Mu, and a 32nd Degree Mason.

Dr. Kerr is survived by his wife, Mrs. Charles W. Kerr, of 2404 E. Woodward Boulevard, Tulsa; a son Hawley Coe Kerr, of 3153 S. Utica Avenue, Tulsa; a daughter, Mrs. Margaret Kerr Hendrick of Amarillo, Texas, and four grandsons.

Dr. Kerr was Tulsa's longest and best loved pastor, a power for good in the community with an undying devotion to home, country, and God.

Fred S. Clinton, M.D.

*Tulsa, Oklahoma*

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## EDWARD ROSS JONES\*

1881—1951

Edward Ross Jones, on Sunday, February 25, 1951, at the age of sixty-nine, surrendered the honored place which he had for so long occupied in the ranks of the membership of this Bar at Muskogee, Oklahoma. His vacant seat will long be noted and the imprint of his character will forever remain upon the memory of all of us who knew, respected and loved him.

Ross Jones was born in Moberly, Missouri, on December 21, 1881. After attending the public schools in this Missouri town, he entered the University of Missouri where, in 1902, he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Laws. He had a brother in Beaumont, Texas, and after his graduation from the University he went there with the idea of engaging in the practice at that place, but after spending a few months in Beaumont he decided against making Texas his permanent home and following a short time in Nevada, Missouri, where his parents were then living, he came to the Indian Territory in February, 1903, selecting Muskogee as his choice of location. In the latter part of 1903, he entered into a partnership with Preston C. West, the firm later being enlarged into West, Mellette & Jones when W. M. Mellette became a member. In the early part of February, 1910, he withdrew from the partnership and set up his own offices, moving into the Surety Building on February 26, 1910, upon its being opened to tenancy.

\* Report of the Committee on Necrology, Muskogee Bar Association.

Those were still pioneer days in the new state, and E. R. Jones contributed a not inconsiderable share to the work of development. At the time of his withdrawal from the partnership in February, 1910, he became general attorney for the Missouri, Oklahoma & Gulf Railway Company, whose line of rails was being rapidly pushed south from Allen, Oklahoma, to Denison, Texas. Construction then began from Wagoner north to Baxter Springs, Kansas.

All of the thousands of legal details incident upon the acquisition of two hundred miles of right-of-way, by condemnation and otherwise, the work of construction with its innumerable contracts and adjustments, as well as the railroad company's corporate management and financing, not to mention the swelling number of lawsuits which inevitably follow such an operation, were his responsibility. And the burden of this responsibility, he bore with credit to himself and benefit to his clients. He continued to serve as general attorney for this railroad until March, 1923, when he gave it up on account of press of other more lucrative business, but meanwhile he accompanied the corporation through two receiverships and through Government control during the first World War.

Although all through the period of intense activity from 1910 to 1920 and beyond, Ross Jones was in extremely bad health and was subjected to constant and severe physical suffering, yet by the exercise of a tremendous courage and an indomitable spirit he forced himself to rise above mere physical limitations and to carry on through the years, giving every job the best he had.

While serving as general attorney for the M. O. & G., later K. O. & G. Railroad, from 1910 to 1923, E. R. Jones had built up a considerable outside practice. He directed and protected the investment of half a million dollars of French capital in the Henryetta coal fields and to the day of his death he ably represented a number of coal mining companies in that field and in the Eastern Oklahoma semi-anthracite fields. He was in charge of the examination of titles and all legal aspects of probably the first investment of the Royal Dutch Schell in this country's oil fields.

Under his legal guidance was carried through an operation involving the purchase of more than 100,000 acres of timber in Northeastern Oklahoma, the building of the logging town of Kenwood, Oklahoma, the placing in operation of a 40,000 feet saw-mill and construction of a twenty-mile railroad, the Oklahoma & Arkansas, to serve the project. The details of this work alone were almost infinite, extending over a period of some three years.

At about the same time he undertook and handled to completion all details of the incorporation, organization and construction of the Miami Mineral Belt Railroad, still operating in Northern Oklahoma.

Simultaneously, his work extended into almost every phase of the civil practice. He was at his best in the guidance of his clients through the most intricate details of corporate management, financing and refinancing.

The writer of this paper was intimately associated with Mr. Jones over a period of twenty-two years, probably coming to know him better than any other person. He has no hesitancy in saying that no problem was presented to be reduced into a workable arrangement, no matter how extended and interwoven its ramifications, that the mind of Mr. Jones did not quickly and surely arrange its scattered details into a complete, understandable framework and at the same time contrive a method of procedure which would bring about the desired result.

He unquestionably was possessed of a "keen intellect." He was firmly and deeply grounded in the law. It sometimes seemed that he arrived at

the answer to a legal problem by intuition. He was intellectually designed by nature for the work he undertook and carried on so well. At the same time Ross Jones was a man with happiness in his heart, a good companion and a firm friend. He was much of a philosopher. From time to time he gave expression to his philosophical meditations in certain wise pronouncements of which the following are but a few examples:

"It doesn't matter how much money you spend, if you make more.

"Remember that to every client his individual problem is more important than all your other business.

"Don't carry personalities into a lawsuit; your opponent today may be your client tomorrow.

"Your client doesn't want you to tell him what he can't do, but how to do what he wants to do.

"It is always extremely difficult to do an unlawful thing, lawfully.

"Mistrust a man who unnecessarily protests his honesty.

"Everyone who comes into a law office expects to be charged a fee."

In closing it may be said that no better proof of the personal and business character of Edward Ross Jones can be brought forth than to say that those who, as partners, were associated with him in the legal practice over the years: Preston C. West, W. M. Mellette, J. C. Perkins, of Alabama, James C. Wilhoit, later with the Tidal Oil, Howard Lee Smith, now of Tulsa, and the one who prepared this paper, (not mentioning his son, Preston W. Jones, his last partner), remained to the day of death his closest friends and admirers.

Signed: L. W. Randolph  
Forrester Brewster  
Claude W. Garrett  
Members of Necrology Committee,  
Bar Association.

*Muskogee, Oklahoma*