

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

### **ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY (1868 – 1941)**

The death of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, on September 14, 1941, closed one of the most distinguished careers in the history of American education.

Born on June 6, 1868, at Andrews, Indiana, he was of English and Huguenot descent with a strain of Quaker ancestry. His forbears had come to New Jersey, whence his grandfather in 1817 migrated to the Middle West. He grew to manhood in the Indiana in the days of Reconstruction, and it was in his father's pharmacy that he spent many of his boyhood hours. This opportunity may have been of crucial importance in turning the youth toward science, for he spent much of his time in a laboratory he constructed for himself behind the prescription counter. His decision to go to college, however, was the result of hearing a lecture by David Starr Jordan on "The Value of a College Education."

In 1886 he entered Indiana University, where he majored in physics and carried much course work in mathematics, chemistry and biology. During his senior year he accompanied Dr. Jordan on weekend trips in the role of stereoptician assistant, an association that resulted in a lifelong friendship destined to have important consequences.

His first experience as a teacher was in a one-room country school in 1888-89, but upon graduation from the University he was appointed, on Dr. Jordan's recommendation, Professor of Science in Vincennes University. Two years later, at the age of twenty-five, he was made president of the institution, and in the following three years he revised the university curriculum and reorganized its finances.

In 1896 he came to the Pacific coast, first of all on Dr. Jordan's recommendation when he was appointed superintendent of schools for San Diego, California. But in 1898 Dr. Jordan invited him to Stanford University as Assistant Professor of Education. The thirty-five years of active service that followed were broken only by two years of graduate study at Columbia and by sabbatical appointments on the faculties of Columbia and Harvard.

It was now clear that he had found his life work, and his place of work. No offers of other positions could lure him away. The record of his achievement from 1899 until his death in 1941 is without parallel. He developed courses in new fields, taught thousands of students, gave innumerable public addresses, served on important educational commissions edited a great textbook series, and wrote twenty volumes covering almost every phase of school administration and the history of education.

The influence of these labors cannot be measured. But these are the facts. His books to the number of a half million copies were studied throughout the English-speaking world. His publications on school administration have left their mark on schools of every state and every city in the country. Those on rural education were among the strongest influences leading to the consolidation of country schools and their improved supervision. His books on the history of education are not only standard texts for the professional student of the subject but have

materially influenced the writing and thinking of historians. His educational utopia as depicted in the constitution and school code of the imaginary state of Osceola may influence the education of children in ages far remote. In their combination of range and scholarship, his books stand alone in their field. In everything he wrote there is a forward look and an evident faith that what he hopes for in education will be achieved. As is so well exemplified in the book which many believe to be his greatest work, The History of Education (1920), he saw education as a great social force shaping the course of civilizations.

"The Riverside Textbooks in Education," planned and edited by Dr. Cubberley over a period of thirty years, have been characterized as "the largest and most successful series of professional books that has ever been published in any country at any time." By his editorship of this series, Dr. Cubberley contributed more than any other person of his generation to the building of an enduring literature of education. And herein was laid the foundation for the splendid gifts which he and Mrs. Cubberley later made to Stanford University.

The outstanding personal factor in the prodigious achievement of Professor Cubberley was the close cooperation of his wife, Helen Van Uxom Cubberley. For nearly fifty years she was his assistant in every undertaking and his inseparable companion and spiritual support. Mrs. Cubberley was co-donor with her husband of the funds they provided for the School of Education building and for the endowment of its library.

Ellwood Patterson Cubberley revealed an extraordinary range of versatility. He was eminent as a teacher, administrator, historian, editor, public speaker, social reformer, and educational engineer. Those who knew him best believe that he could have achieved eminence as a physicist, chemist, geologist, architect, financier, or industrial manager. Next to versatility, perhaps his most prominent intellectual trait was the rare power of constructive imagination that enabled him to organize complex fields of knowledge on the basis of clearly perceived relationships; the gift, in short, of orderly thinking. Among his other outstanding traits were a balanced and integrated personality, freedom from inner conflicts, energetic drive, personal charm, loyalty, and helpfulness to others. He was a truly great teacher. His lectures were characterized by scholarly mastery of his material, clear exposition, and dramatic illustration. His unbounded faith in education as a social force inspired his students with his own zest for public service. Because of his personal interest in all who worked with him he is remembered with gratitude, admiration, and affection by generations of Stanford students.

Be it therefore resolved that we, the Academic Council of Stanford University, extend to Mrs. Cubberley our deep sympathy for her tragic loss and that we record this material in the Council's minutes.

Edgar C. Rohman  
Jesse B. Sears  
Lewis M. Terman, Chairman