

MEMORIAL FOR JAMES O. COATES

James Otis Coates, a member of The Literary Club since 1977, died October 28, 1986, at Christ Hospital after a series of illnesses against which he fought until the very end.

He had had an exemplary life and legal career. He was born in Cincinnati in 1914, graduated from Walnut Hills High School in 1931, from Princeton University in 1935 and from Harvard Law School in 1938 as a Doctor of Jurisprudence. He then became an associate in the law firm of Dinsmore, Shohl, Sawyer and Dinsmore (now Dinsmore & Shohl). He became a partner in 1946 upon his return from active service in the United States Navy and practiced with the firm until his death.

In 1943, he was granted a commission in the U.S. Naval Reserves and trained as an Air Combat Information Officer at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. After further training in the field, he became a night fighter director to serve on Navy aircraft carriers in the Pacific and later aboard the Independence in the Indo-China theater.

In his law practice, his interests grew with the times and his cumulative experience. In his early legal years, the consequences of the New Deal's financial measures were winding through the courts, notably involving the Securities and Exchange Commission, the abandonment of the gold standard (especially the Gold Clause cases) and N.R.A. -- in all of which Jim was deeply involved. In the late 1940's, his practice was extended into general corporate matters, and in the 1950's, when many U.S. firms were expanding into overseas markets, his legal acumen was enlisted by The Procter & Gamble Company, among others, in planning and executing such overseas moves.

His Literary Club papers reflected his life experiences. There were some Navy service reminiscences and some accounts of overseas experiences. Especially interesting and witty was his last paper in December 1984, entitled "Foreign Language and the Law," describing some of the complexities and improbabilities resulting from efforts to negotiate and write agreements in technical fields in two languages. The device is often used in foreign transactions where the parties on each side of a given negotiation are at home only in their own language and, therefore, agree to have all necessary

documents written in both languages. It works to everybody's satisfaction until, just to be sure everything is clearly understood, a cross-translation check up is suggested; that is the point at which, for example, the English version is translated into French by a new translator without access to the original French language version. Sparks fly, heads shake, eyebrows arch -- and Jim added it to his paper.

Only a few weeks before his death, Jim was planning to complete and read his next scheduled paper for The Literary Club. We shall miss Jim's quiet warmth, his searching mind and his quick sense of humor. Our sympathy goes to his widow, Claire M. Coates, to his children by his deceased first wife, sons James and Thomas Coates, and daughter, Virginia Lee Denton, and to his stepchildren, Sally Minning and Thomas Roy. We share their sorrow.

Alan R. Vogeler, Chairman
Edward W. Merkel
Estie Asbury
Guido J. Gores
