

**THE MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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**MEMORIALS OF GEORGE WEEMS WILLIAMS  
AND HERBERT K. STOCKTON**

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**Memorial of George Weems Williams**

By STUART S. JANNEY.

George Weems Williams, a distinguished member of the Maryland Bar and long a member of this Association, died at his home on Blythewood Road in Baltimore, on June 23, 1937, two days before reaching the age of sixty-three. Born a Marylander of parentage distinguished in the legal and maritime affairs of the State, he was educated in the private schools of the State, at Princeton University and at the University of Maryland, where he received his degree of Bachelor of Laws. It is a satisfaction to his host of friends that his career amply justifies the inclusion of his name among the small coterie of the elect at the Bar.

His natural ability, his education and background brought him recognition almost immediately after his admission. He early formed a partnership with Carroll T. Bond, now Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland. At the time of his death he was the head of the firm of Marbury, Gosnell & Williams.

George Williams was one of those unusual personalities that combined rare legal ability with an irreproachable character, extraordinary industry and a delightful sense of humor which never left him. He loved the trial of cases both at *nisi prius* and on appeal, and the wide practice he always enjoyed gave him frequent

opportunity to appear in the most important litigation of his day. He never appeared in court without the most careful preparation, and his presence at the trial table, his examination and cross-examination of witnesses and his argument were invariably not only a contribution to the cause of his client, but were of material and intelligent assistance to the Court in dispensing justice based on the truth, and were a guaranty of the maintenance at the trial table of the highest possible standards of ethical conduct. The intellectual honesty of the man gave his arguments deserved and special weight, because the Court always knew that his argument was sincere and that he never descended to concealment of fact or any other subterfuge or unworthy method.

While he always enjoyed an important admiralty practice, he was in no sense a specialist, and a large part of his work was devoted to representing and advising individuals and corporations in matters of corporate and business finance.

An accurate estimate of Mr. Williams' life and character was set forth in an editorial of the *Baltimore Sun* as follows:

“For Mr. Williams' was no light and easily shaken loyalty, whether to men or to ideas, but a devotion based on the same sort of principle as that which guarded his private conduct. In politics, there were candidates he could not stomach, just as in law practice, there were clients he would not touch for any fee, and lawyers he would not associate with. It is rare for a man of such candor and inflexible principle, to be possessed, too, of so rich a supply of charm and social grace; for so much gentleness and modesty to be blended with such iron determination. No city has anywhere near enough of such men, and no reservoir for quickly replacing them.”

It is fitting that a member of such lofty character and distinguished achievements should have his passing marked by some appropriate tribute from his fellow members of this Association, and it is for the purpose of making a lasting record of the high esteem in which he was everywhere held that this minute is prepared to present to The Maritime Law Association of the United States with the request that it be inscribed upon its permanent records.

## Memorial of Herbert K. Stockton

By HAROLD S. DEMING.

Herbert K. Stockton was born at Sparkill, New York, September 15, 1882, the son of Admiral and Mrs. Charles H. Stockton. At the time of his son's birth, Admiral Stockton was on duty in the Bering Sea, so that it was six months before he first met his son.

The Stocktons were of English descent; Richard Stockton, founder of the Stockton family in America, arriving at Flushing, Long Island, some time prior to November 8, 1656. He first appears in the public records in the tolerant and public-spirited role of a signer of a petition requesting the release of William Wickenden, who had been fined and imprisoned for preaching without a license.

A later Richard Stockton, a member of the Continental Congress and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, sacrificed both his life and his high position in our struggle for liberty. Although prior to the revolution he was a Judge of the Supreme Court and a member of the Kings Council of New Jersey, he considered it his duty to avoid the conflict if possible. To this end he submitted in 1774 "An Expedient for the Settlement of American Disputes." When conflict was unavoidable he considered himself bound to take the part of the colonists and was chosen by the Provincial Congress of New Jersey as a delegate to the Continental Congress. In 1776 the Continental Congress sent him with George Clymer to report on the situation at Ticonderoga and Saratoga while the army of General Burgoyne was approaching from the north. Later he was made a prisoner. Although soon exchanged, he did not long survive the mistreatment he received while a captive.

Commodore Robert Stockton was another energetic and liberty-loving member of the family. Although a stern disciplinarian, he is known to the Navy not only as a conqueror of California but also as the man who abolished flogging from the Navy. In spite of being outnumbered, he drove the Mexicans from California by vigorous campaigns and forced marches. Commodore Stockton was in command of the colonizing expedition that negotiated for the acquisition of land on the West Coast of Africa which after-

wards became the Republic of Liberia. On this voyage Commodore Stockton captured several foreign slavers and on a later voyage he captured the French slaver *Jeune Eugenie*. The resulting lawsuit established the right of American officers to seize slavers under a foreign flag.

The Reverend Thomas H. Stockton, an anti-slavery pioneer and a leader of the Philadelphia clergy, as well as Chaplain of the United States Senate and of the House of Representatives, made the prayer at the consecration of our Gettysburg National Cemetery, November 19, 1863, when President Lincoln presented his immortal dedicatory address.

Admiral Charles Herbert Stockton, father of Herbert K. Stockton, spent most of his life in the Navy, serving as the President of the United States Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, and as the United States Naval Attaché at the Court of St. James. After retirement, he was named President of George Washington University. He was also an authority on international law and the author of "Outlines of International Law" and other works.

Herbert K. Stockton first attended the Rogers High School, Newport, Rhode Island, and was later graduated from Harvard College in 1902 and from Harvard Law School in 1905. During part of his law school course, he acted as assistant instructor in Professor Baker's course in argumentation. Upon graduation from Harvard Law School, Mr. Stockton first was employed by the firm of Hughes, Rounds & Schurman, later Rounds, Schurman & Dwight, as law clerk and managing clerk. He then, in 1909, turned to trial work with the firm of De Forest Brothers. In 1912 he was with Caldwell, Masslich & Reed, where he engaged in general litigation, specializing in municipal and private corporation law.

In 1915 he became a member of the firm of Haight, Sandford & Smith and remained in its successor firms, Haight, Sandford, Smith & Griffin, Haight, Smith, Griffin & Deming and Haight, Griffin, Deming & Gardner, until the day of death, January 2, 1939.

As his friends would have expected, Mr. Stockton died with his boots on in the midst of an active career. On December 1, 1938, he broke his ankle in a coasting accident while on a short vacation following two strenuous court sessions. Within a day or two he was hard at work on office matters although still confined

to his hospital bed. His recovery was seemingly satisfactory until he was stricken down by coronary thrombosis.

During his later life Mr. Stockton specialized in admiralty and international law. After being engaged in charterparty and cargo work for many years he turned to general counsel work for steamship lines, dealing with the numerous problems that arise in connection with passenger tickets, bills of lading, pier leases, agency contracts, local taxes, etc.

Shortly before leaving on his delayed vacation last fall he had just won a signal victory in *Compagnie Generale Transatlantique v. McGoldrick*, 279 N. Y. 192. There he successfully maintained that it was unconstitutional for the City of New York to tax fuel oil purchased from New Jersey refineries and delivered directly to the ship's side in New York. Mr. Stockton first tried the question of tax liability before Deputy Comptroller Goodgold, then, on appeal from an adverse decision, secured a reversal in the Appellate Division (254 App. Div. 237), and finally defeated the City's appeal in the Court of Appeals.

Outside of the practice of law, Mr. Stockton was always a defender of depressed minorities. He was a member of the Board of American Indian Defense Association which worked to protect the rights of Pueblo Indians of New Mexico against Congressional land raids. He also took an active part in the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, serving both as an active member of the Board of Directors and as a member of the Legal Committee. Devoting much time and energy to anti-lynching legislation, he collaborated in the drafting of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill and the Wagner-Van Nuys Anti-Lynching Bill. He submitted briefs on their constitutionality to the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate and appeared before the Senate Committee in behalf of the Wagner-Van Nuys Bill.

With the purpose of developing an American repertory theatre, he was one of the organizers of the American Laboratory Theatre. Under the direction of Richard Boleslavsky the theatre produced many new plays and in conjunction with an associated dramatic school successfully trained several hundred young actors. Mr. Stockton took a most active part in this work. Not content to contribute heavily of his time and money in organization work, he

dove into the actual dramatics with great enthusiasm and even wrote some of the plays that were produced.

Mr. Stockton was very fond of music, Bach being his favorite composer, and he had a large collection of Bach records; he also was a member of the Dessoff Choir and a subscriber to the Bach Festival at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

In 1905 Mr. Stockton married Miss Miriam Kimball of Boston, who survives him, together with their daughter, Mrs. Anne Stockton Goodwin.

We who worked with Mr. Stockton will always remember his energy and enthusiasm, and, above all, his delightful sense of humor. However busy he might be, with papers piled high on his desk and with his telephone in constant use, he was never too occupied to exchange a few cheery words and he was always willing to lay aside his own work in order to aid others with their problems.