

CARL LEO MEES

COLUMBUS, OHIO
May 20, 1853

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
April 19, 1932

Carl Leo Mees, M. D., Ph. D., President Emeritus of Rose Polytechnic Institute, died at Terre Haute on April 19, 1932, after a short illness. Funeral services were held at his home in Terre Haute and in Columbus, Ohio, where interment took place. Dr. Mees was unmarried but had a



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number of nephews and nieces, among them being Dr. Otto Mees, President of Capitol University.

Dr. Carl Leo Mees was born in Columbus, Ohio, May 20, 1853, son of Rev. Konrad and Elise (Adam) Mees. His father was a native of Germany and came to this country when a young man, settling first in New York and later coming to Columbus, where he served one congregation for over fifty years.

Dr. Mees' education was received from private instructors. At the age of about eleven years he entered the eighth grade of the public school and was graduated from the Columbus High School in 1869. While a student in high school he acted as assistant to Dr. Thomas C. Mendenhall, his instructor in physics, from whom he received the inspiration which led him to specialize in physics and chemistry.

After completing his high school work Dr. Mees entered Starling Medical College where he came in contact with Dr. Thomas G. Wormley, at that time one of the greatest authorities in the world on poisons and the foremost chemist in legal expert work in the United States. The work of Dr. Mees was along the line of perfecting the methods for the detection and identification of human blood and tissues in suspected murder cases. In the course of this work he devised and perfected a method of microscopic identification which was accepted throughout the profession. He was the first to succeed in photographing different kinds of blood for comparison and exhibition to juries. This work was standardized and accepted in the United States Army and Navy Museum. Some 100,000 blood measurements were made by this method.

In order to qualify properly in court in medico-legal cases at that time the degree of M. D. was universally required. Therefore, Dr. Mees took the medical course parallel with his work in chemistry and received his degree in medicine in 1874. However, he never practiced medicine. The two following years were spent in the Ohio State University, then known as the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, where he devoted his time to the study of physics under Dr. Mendenhall. During this period he continued to act as assistant to Dr. Wormley and to give lectures upon the microscope in Starling Medical College, and upon chemical laboratory practice in Columbus Medical College.

As if all these activities were not enough for one man, the young scientist was associated during this same period with Professor Weber of the Ohio Geological Survey in the analysis of minerals and soils, and personally made some six hundred analyses which were published in the State Reports, 1871-1875. He was also assistant State Gas Inspector for three years, testing all the meters of the State except in Cincinnati.

In 1875 Dr. Mees was elected Professor of Physics and Chemistry in the University of the Public Schools of Louisville, now known as the Louisville Male High School. While there he operated an electric arc light, the first ever seen on the Ohio River, on the steamer Gen. Lytle, by connecting a Wallace generator to the donkey engine of the vessel. He also experimented with the telephone as a commercial proposition.

In 1880 he resigned his teaching position and went abroad for study. He spent some time in the University of Berlin under Helmholtz, Kirchoff and Hoffmann; also in South Kensington under Professor Frankland and in London under Dr. Tyndall.

In 1882 he was called to the professorship in Physics and Chemistry at the newly organized Ohio University in Athens, remaining in that position until 1887. During that period he lectured on sound and music at the Cincinnati School of Music, at teachers' institutes and on other occasions. He also carried on experimental studies upon wind velocities

in tornadoes. By reproducing certain observed phenomena in the laboratory, successful measurements were made.

In September, 1887, Dr. Mees was called to the position of Assistant Professor of Physics under Dr. T. C. Mendenhall, who had recently become President and Professor of Physics at Rose Polytechnic Institute, Terre Haute, Indiana. In 1889, Dr. Mees was made Professor of Physics. After the resignation of Dr. Mendenhall in 1890 he acted as Chairman of the Faculty until Dr. Eddy assumed the presidency in 1891. He was made Acting President in 1894 and elected President in 1895, in which position he served until his resignation in September, 1919, when he was made President Emeritus. In 1893, Rose Polytechnic Institute conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A memorial service was held at Rose Polytechnic Institute on May 18th, at which expressions of appreciation for the work and personality of Dr. Mees were given on behalf of the community, the alumni and the faculty of the Institute.

At its October meeting the Board of Managers of Rose adopted the following resolution:

“Doctor Carl Leo Mees, President of Rose Polytechnic Institute from 1895 to 1919, when he became President Emeritus, died at Terre Haute on April 19th. In addition to the address by the President of the Board of Managers at the Memorial Service held for him May 18th, the Board wishes formally to record in its minutes its great regret at the passing of Doctor Mees, its sense of loss and its deep appreciation of the services which for so many years he rendered to Rose Polytechnic Institute. As Professor and President, his whole interest was the welfare of the college and the success of the students, and as President Emeritus, his advice was frequently of great assistance to the Board and members of the Faculty.”

D. B. PRENTICE.

Dr. Mees' Society affiliations included:

Fellow American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Member American Institute Electrical Engineers.

Member American Microscopical Society.

Member American Physical Society.

Member Society for Promotion of Engineering Education.

Member Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers.

Member North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Honorary Member American Steel Treating Research Society.

Fellow Indiana Academy of Science.

Honorary Member Credit Men's Association.

Honorary Member Scientific Club of Indianapolis.

Honorary Member Vigo County Medical Society.

Honorary Member Vigo County Historical Society.

Honorary Member Exchange Club of Terre Haute.

Dr. Mees was general secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1889; secretary of Section B of the same, 1888; president of Section B, 1896; president of Section E in 1920. President of Indiana Academy of Science in 1898.