

## EDGAR O. RICHARDS

by

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The Bench and Bar of Northampton County were saddened by the death of Edgar O. Richards on July 21, 1970 and it is appropriate that a record of his activities and accomplishments be made upon the Court Minutes of this County.

Mr. Richards was born in Easton, Pennsylvania, on July 14, 1899, and lived in Easton most of his life. In fact, the funeral home at 14th and Northampton Streets in Easton, from which his final services were conducted, had been the Richards' family home in which he was born and raised.

Edgar attended Easton schools and then Phillips Academy, graduating from the latter school in 1916. He then attended and graduated from Harvard University, from which he received a Master's Degree, and Columbia University Law School. Near the end of World War I he served for a few months in the U. S. Naval Reserve. After graduating from Harvard he taught in the Language Departments of New York University and Lafayette College.

In 1930, Mr. Richards interrupted his teaching career to attend Law School at Columbia University, and in 1933, after receiving his Law Degree from Columbia, he returned to Easton and was admitted to the Bar of Northampton County for the practice of law.

With his father, Elijah J. Richards, having been one of the founders of The Northampton National Bank of Easton, it was almost inevitable that Edgar's practice would become business-oriented. However, he began a private practice by opening a law office in the Bank Building having no connection with the Bank's business. Shortly thereafter he joined his office with that of Attorney Charles P. Maxwell, and for a period of time practiced in association with Mr. Maxwell.

Several years later Mr. Richards shared a suite of law offices with the late Honorable Judge Frank P. McCluskey, and during the period that Judge McCluskey was on the Bench Edgar occasionally assisted the Judge with legal research on cases which presented some unusual difficulty or which con-

tained some particularly interesting point of law. In the meanwhile, the business of the Northampton National Bank began to make greater demands upon his time and attention, and these demands increased greatly as his father neared the end of his life.

The elder Mr. Richards died on May 20, 1944, and by this time Edgar had become both a banker and a lawyer. He had been a member of the Board of Directors since 1929, but until his father's final illness Edgar's interest continued to be primarily directed to his law office. He was not a trial lawyer, and he was not often seen at the Court House. However, he remained abreast of developments in the law and derived a great deal of satisfaction from conducting legal research and assisting in the preparation of briefs with other attorneys.

Edgar Richards became the most important voice in the Northampton National Bank, and he could have taken upon himself whatever title he may have wished. However, he held no title in the Bank until the final six months of his life when, in January of this year, he was elected Senior Vice President. He was active in almost every department of the Bank's operations, but he occupied himself principally with the duties of an investment officer. He was continually engaged in a study of the financial market in order to obtain the greatest and safest returns on the investment of the Bank's assets and the depositors' accounts.

The Bank, of course, always retained a Solicitor, but Edgar never officially served in that capacity. Nevertheless, the members of this committee, having had the privilege of serving as Solicitors to the Bank, can attest to the fact that very few routine legal questions went beyond Edgar's desk, and when the Bank's Solicitor was called upon, Edgar often took some part in the discussion of the question. The value and extent of his services to the Bank in this regard were vividly demonstrated when he became incapacitated by the illness which ended his life less than a year later.

Mr. Richards is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Joan Pattiz, and a grandson, Anthony Pattiz. His daughter now occupies his seat on the Board of Directors of The Northampton National Bank.

Mr. Richards maintained a close association with the Bank's personnel, and his dealings with them were always conducted in a calm and friendly atmosphere. The mutual respect and esteem of Mr. Richards and his associates can be demonstrated by the fact that the three top officers have served the Bank for a combined period of more than 150 years.