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Museletter: September 2004

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Museletter

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WHO WAS WILLIAM TAYLOR MUSE?

By John R. Barden,
Head, Reference & Research Services

You walk through the doors day after day. Over your head are gold letters telling you that you are entering the "William Taylor Muse Law Library." To the right of the display cases outside the Special Collections reading room is a portrait of William Taylor Muse. On a wall in the Reference area is a plaque dedicating the Law Library to William Taylor Muse. The name is all around you; we thought it might be a good idea to remind you why--

William Taylor Muse was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, in 1906. He came to the University of Richmond as a undergraduate and stayed to receive his law degree in 1930, taking both the First-Year Prize and the Senior Medal. He entered law practice in Richmond but returned to the Law School part-time in 1931 as an associate professor. The next year he took up teaching full-time at the University of Richmond School of Law, an association that was to last for thirty-nine years.

Professor Muse taught torts, corporations, domestic relations, and insurance law to thousands of students who passed through the Law School during his long tenure. He relied exclusively on the case method for teaching and dwelt on the ins and outs of Virginia law in particular. He developed a reputation as a tough professor with a dry sense of humor, an image he did not try to dispel. On one occasion, he passed a couple of students playing ping-pong in the lounge. As he walked by, he was heard to comment, "Ah, gentlemen! 'A' in ping-pong, 'F' in torts!"

In 1947 Muse was named dean of the Law School to succeed Dean M. Ray Doubles, who had been appointed to the bench. Over the next twenty-four years, Muse guided the Law School through remarkable changes. When he took the helm, the Law School was still housed in Columbia Hall on the old campus of Richmond College in the Fan. Muse supervised the move to the

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Fall 2004 Regular Library Hours

Sunday
10:00 a.m. - Midnight

Mon.-Thurs.
7:30 a.m. - Midnight

Friday
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

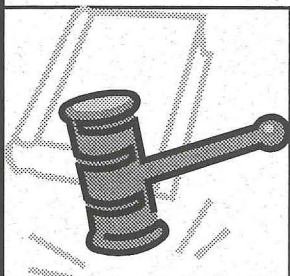
Saturday
9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Fall Break
Friday, 10/8—7:30 a.m. to
10:00 p.m.

Saturday, 10/9 and Sunday,
10/10 - 8:30 a.m. to 7:00

p.m.

Monday, 10/11—7:30 a.m. to
6:00 p.m.



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current Law School, a new Gothic-style building on the Westhampton campus, in 1954 and went on to plan its first expansion in 1971.

The Law School in Dean Muse's time was a much more intimate environment than today's institution. The Dean personally interviewed most incoming students. He set high expectations and strict rules for students but was known for his willingness to work with students facing unanticipated difficulties. Although conservative by nature, he is credited with raising the Law School's profile through improvements in admission standards, library collection, and curriculum expansion.

In addition to his teaching and administrative career, Dean Muse made substantial contributions in the areas of published scholarship and bar activities. His two-years' work at Harvard Law School resulted in the *Virginia Annotations to the Restatement of Torts*, published in 1944 by the American Law Institute, of which he was a member. He was secretary-treasurer of the Virginia State Bar Association, 1941-1960, and served as its president, 1961-1962. He also served on numerous state commissions and community boards.

Muse served as Dean until shortly before his death, which occurred on October 31, 1971. More than thirty years later, it is hard to grasp how closely people identified the Law School with its Dean. One writer described the School as Muse's "lengthened shadow." Although much has changed in the interim, the University of Richmond School of Law still owes much to the work and vision of its leader for nearly a quarter of a century, William Taylor Muse.

Library Policy Reminders

Drinks: Please use the spill resistant containers in the library. Pull tops, screw tops, covered containers from commercial vendors are considered acceptable. People using open cans or glasses will be asked to take them out of the library.

Cell phones: So you do not disturb the people trying to study, please turn off the ringer on your cell phone and respond to calls received outside the library.

Voices carry: All too often we forget just how much our voices carry, especially in the library.

Reshelve: Please remember that others are often waiting to use the same resources that you are using. Please reshelve your books as soon as you have finished with them.

Fido: We all love Fido, but Fido does not belong in the library.

Law at the Movies (New on DVD): *The Score*

by Gail Zwirner

Only one line by Angela Bassett qualifies this movie for inclusion in the library's collection of legal movies. She referred to a comment her father used to say about his law practice, something like (Professor Douglass, close your ears.) – "in negotiating a deal, if both parties are satisfied, you aren't representing your client well." Other than that, there really is no legal theme in *The Score*, except an extremely well-orchestrated crime.

I don't know why I like this movie so much, but I've seen it four times. Perhaps it's the exquisite setting in "Old" Montreal. The cobblestone streets, handsome lighting, the historic buildings, an uncluttered streetscape – something parts of Richmond could be, but doesn't quite do it right. The cast is tough to beat too -- Robert DeNiro, Edward Norton, Angela Bassett, and Marlon Brando, in what I now realize could have been his last, or one of his last roles. The case, the setting, and a nail-biting caper where you root for the bad guy, all make a movie that can't go wrong.

Robert DeNiro plays a safecracker, who wants to settle down with girlfriend, Angela Bassett, and his newly-renovated jazz club. His colleague Nick (Brando) convinced him to do one more job for \$4 million. Brando offered some help with the Edward Norton character. A reluctant DeNiro, whose firm rules had always been to work alone and never work where he lives, accepted the young guy's help to serve as an insider and hack into the security system.

Norton ends up being the real talent in this movie. I've seen several of his movies, and he was exceptional in all of them. This movie from the Summer of 2001 sure beats the pathetic releases of 2004.

To see a list of all recreational DVDs in the Law Library's collection, go to the library catalog at <http://librarycat.richmond.edu>.

- In the search box, type "DVD Movie."
 - Under "search by," scroll down to "call number."
- Click on "search."

From the obnoxious demands of the Bill Gates character in *Antitrust* to his attorneys in his litigation with the government to "make it work," the steamy estate manipulations in *Body Heat*, the memorable performance by Robert Duvall as the consigliere in the *Godfather*, Julia Roberts' Oscar-winning role in *Erin Brockovich*, to the ridiculous *Legally Blonde*, and many more, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Library Closing Procedures

For the night owls who want to eek out every minute of study time, the following are the procedures the library staff follow to close the library:

- Approximately 30 minutes prior to the closing time, someone will flash the lights on all floors and announce that the library will close in 30 minutes. Patrons should complete any photocopying, reshelve any books they are using, pick up and printing they did in the lab, return any reserve materials, and process any books they want to check out or return at the Circulation Desk.
- Approximately 15 minutes prior to closing, the Library Staff will turn off the photocopiers, shut down the computer monitors, and lock the lab. Patrons should shut down their computers, and begin gathering the materials they want to take when they leave the library.
- At the closing time, the library doors are locked, and all patrons should have exited the library.

We appreciate your cooperation. Please be mindful of closing times when attending activities such as the "Down Unders." For example, the library closes at 9:00 p.m. on Friday evenings. -gfz

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The **Museletter** is the official newsletter of the
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