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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

EDWARD R. JOHNSTONE

In the death of Professor Edward R. Johnstone, New Jersey has lost a great personality, a man of truly fine accomplishments in the field of public affairs and of irreproachable character.

The recipient of many well-deserved honors during his lifetime from his associates for his labors in the field of State government and in the cause of education and training for backward children, Prof. Johnstone's influences and friendships in his personal life were no less helpful and guiding to those who sought his counsel.

His unassuming nature and his gentleness of bearing were perhaps his most distinguishing traits. He never lost the real humility which is the mark of a truly great character, despite the richly-earned expressions of esteem heaped upon him for his strivings in behalf of backward children, or for those whom society of necessity placed in penal institutions and, in fact, for all who were troubled in spirit and in need of guidance and assistance.

From the earliest foundation of the Department of Institutions and Agencies, his influence for good was great. By his wise counsel and advice to those who had the responsibility of administering the State's hospital and correctional institutions, Professor Johnstone left a deep and lasting influence on the welfare program of this State.

It was my good fortune to know Prof. Johnstone years before I became associated with the institutions' department, because of his membership on the New Jersey Board of Prison Managers. I had the honor of being associated with him in at least two international prison congresses and, like other people, I was immediately impressed with his sincerity, his high character and his many accomplishments in the welfare field.

A member of the prison board of managers since 1921, and president of that board during the middle '20's, Prof. Johnstone immeasurably strengthened New Jersey's effort to construct a realistic but humane penal system.

Similarly, his 46 years as head of the Vineland Training School for mentally deficient children, following the death of the founder of that school, led to nothing but good for that institution. His work and his inspiring leadership brought that school a fitting recognition throughout the world for its efforts on behalf of children who had no chance to develop normally. It was his example and his untiring efforts that made this possible.

No finer summing up for Professor Johnstone could be quoted than that spoken of him by the late Angelo Patri a few years ago on the 50th anniversary of the Vineland Training School:

“He took the helpless, the unloved and unwanted and surrounded them with loving care. He welcomed the beloved but blighted children of heart-broken fathers and mothers, and the school became father and mother, brother and sister to them.

“He took in the lame, and the halt and the blind and comforted them who had never known comfort. He gave them work they could do, play they could enjoy, lessons they could learn, teachers who understood them, physicians who helped them and eased their pain.

“He created a new world for them and they lived there, happy, respected, useful citizens.”

SANFORD BATES.
