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In Memoriam, 1968-1969: Ernst Levy

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IN MEMORIAM 1968-1969

ERNST LEVY

A career in legal scholarship of nearly forty years came to a close in early September with the passing of Ernst Levy, one of the finest of Roman Law scholars, in his 86th year.

Professor Levy came to the University of Washington in 1936 as a Walker-Ames Visiting Professor and remained on the Faculty as Professor of Law, History and Political Science until his retirement as professor emeritus in 1952.

In 1956 the Federal Republic of Germany bestowed on Dr. Levy its highest honor, the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit, in recognition of his "meritorious service in the field of law as a scholar and teacher" and "his major contributions to German legal thought and education."

Ernst Levy was born in Berlin on December 23, 1881. He received a doctor of law degree from the University of Berlin in 1906, and served as a judge in Oranienberg from 1909 to 1913 before embarking on a teaching career at the University of Berlin. In 1915 he was called into the army and served the next three years in Russia and France, returning to teaching in 1919, where he became Professor of Roman and German Law at the University of Frankfurt. He later taught at the University of Freiburg (1922-1928) and the University of Heidelberg (1928-1935).

Through his research and writing, Dr. Levy established himself as the foremost authority on the vulgar law of the western part of the Roman Empire. The most notable of his numerous published works was the two-volume "West Roman Vulgar Law: The Law of Property." Published in 1951 and 1956, his work was the first exposition of this historical legal development ever undertaken, and was the culmination of Dr. Levy's many years of research, generously supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society.

Professor Levy's many awards included an honorary doctor of laws degree in 1949 from John Wolfgang Goethe University at Frankfurt (in conjunction with a centennial celebration of Goethe's birth); and an honorary doctor of philosophy degree from Heidelberg University in the same year.

Ernst Levy's career was marked by dedication to enriching the knowledge of the law. Characteristically, he pursued research not at the expense of his students but rather toward their enrichment. Gentleman, scholar and colleague, he was in every sense a truly distinguished professor.