

*Karl Nickerson Llewellyn*

A typical day for Karl Nickerson Llewellyn begins early for it is during the hours before breakfast that much of his work is done. After preparing coffee, which he maintains is best done by steeping, he begins the day's work. Whatever his project, the first draft of written work invariably is done on yellow, lined, legal-sized paper, and usually in pencil, a yellow lead pencil. These implements are important in the craft of lawyering to Mr. Llewellyn, who is not convinced that an attorney can function as efficiently on a white, unlined leaf. During the morning and throughout the day, he fills up several pages with letters to authors of articles he has read, letters to editors, ideas for lectures or articles, and perhaps poetry. He produces such a quantity of material that only a part of it is ever worked into final form.

Much of Professor Llewellyn's working time at home and in his law school office is spent in preparing lectures to be presented to his classes. He never uses old lecture notes, but always reworks the material he has in the light of his present thinking on the subject, adding new material and deleting other. His constant revision is remarkable since nearly all of Professor Llewellyn's life in the law has been spent in teaching. After receiving his LLB from Yale Law School, he served as an instructor in law while he completed his work for a JD. He then accepted a position with the New York law firm of Shearman and Sterling, although he probably considered his work there to be more of a continuation of his interest in negotiable instrument law than as the start of a career in the practice of law. While a member of the firm he had the opportunity to work with the New York banks in revising the forms which they used in international trade. From his experience with banking problems, he developed an interest in letters of credit and cable transfer questions which has continued throughout his career and is evident in his work as the Chief Reporter of the Uniform Commercial Code. After two years, Llewellyn returned to continue his teaching career at Yale Law School. He then served on the faculty of Columbia University where he held the chair of Betts Professor of Law. He was a guest professor at the University of Leipzig and Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. In 1951 he joined the University of Chicago Law School as Professor of Law in which capacity he is presently serving.

In the actual presentation of his materials in class, Karl Llewellyn is much the same today as he was when he taught his first class in Negotiable Instru-

*Continued on page 30*

*Llewellyn Profile—*

*Continued from page 18*

ments at Yale. He brings to his classes an enthusiasm for the law and a sensitivity and sincere dedication to the finer tradition of the lawyer's craft. His robust, fresh approach to law, and to life, induces him to develop new theories and ways of doing things which he enjoys discussing with his classes and his colleagues. His is the talent, moreover, of impressing a notion upon the minds of his students with a dramatic, almost indelible quality. His unique choice of words and illustrations and his coordination of vocal expression and gesture enable him to communicate with his students with an intensity and vividness they do not forget. One day after strongly emphasizing the dis-

advantages of paraphrasing a statute, he had his entire class repeat several times in unison the phrase, "Never paraphrase a statute." Someone in that class may some day paraphrase a statute, but it is doubtful he will do so without remembering that he should "Never . . .".

It has been suggested that Mr. Llewellyn is on occasion given to overstatement. Whether or not that is so, it is true that no one is more generous in praising a job well done than Karl Llewellyn. His great admiration for men such as Scrutton and Cardozo is well known and has been expressed by him many times; these were men with horse sense who could get to the barebones of a problem and come up with a lovely, clean law-job that bites. Speaking of such a man, Professor Llewellyn will sometimes strike the desk with his fist, shake his head and, with a twinkle in his eye, exclaim, "What a man it was!" On the other hand, it is equally true that few are more devastating in condemning a job considered to be poorly done; Mr. Llewellyn hates a lousy, lazy job and has no use for the man who did it, damn his soul, and does not hesitate to tell him so.

Professor Llewellyn and his wife, Soia Mentschikoff, also on the faculty of the University of Chicago Law School, reserve one evening a week for an 'at home' with their students affording them an opportunity to know their students better. Mr. Llewellyn is a widely read man, has many interests outside the law and is happy to talk with students on various topics whether or not related to law. This is typical of the personal interest Professor Llewellyn has always taken in his students. And many of the men who have studied under him write from time to time telling him of their plans and accomplishments.

A list of Mr. Llewellyn's interests outside of law should include his activity as a boxer while a student at Yale. His participation in sports today, however, centers mainly around golf which he plays regularly. The development and care of orchards is another subject which holds an especial fascination for Mr. Llewellyn, and is one in which he considers himself somewhat expert. Cats, of course, have been a great love of his for many years. He has owned several Maltese cats which he has even used as the subjects of some of his poems. For, in addition to the many books, articles and lectures on law he has published, Karl Llewellyn has found time to put together two books of poetry, *Beach Plums* and *Put In His Thumb*. His poems deal with a wide range of subjects which have interested him; some even deal with certain aspects of the law. But whatever the topic, they all contain the vitality and depth which characterize all of Professor Llewellyn's work, and which, in fact, characterize Professor Llewellyn himself.