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EVERY DAY LAW FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

HON. EDWARD C. DAY

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A little known course at West Denver High School—probably the only one of its kind in the country—is indirectly, and perhaps by pure accident, doing more to foster good public relations for the legal profession than many of the planned programs which the writer has encountered.

Called "Every Day Law for Seniors," the lecture course is part of the general education classes in the school. It was designed, of course, to help prepare the seniors for better citizenship. But its indirect effect has been to awaken an awareness in the students of the vital part the legal profession plays in community life. When these seniors have completed this course they have had forcibly demonstrated to them that consultation with lawyers concerning many every-day transactions of life is just as important as "seeing their dentist twice a year."

The prime objectives in mind in presenting this lecture course are (1) to increase students' knowledge concerning laws governing their every-day living; (2) to show that law is a basic device for protecting the individual and assuring his freedom; (3) to help the students realize the limitations of their privileges, rights and freedoms in society so that they may live more harmoniously with each other; (4) to show that *people* make laws and that laws are not static but that they are dynamic.

To accomplish these objectives the students are told about:

1. Laws concerning parents' responsibility towards their children.
2. Laws concerning education of children.
3. Laws concerning marriage and divorce.
4. Laws pertaining to insurance.
5. Laws pertaining to wills and inheritance.
6. Laws regulating travel and public conveyances.
7. Employer-employee relationships and the laws important to those relationships.
8. Laws concerning the purchase of property, real and personal, with the related subject of chattel mortgages and landlord and tenant relationships.

In addition to the general lectures by teachers who have spent considerable time in research to present—but not to interpret—the basic laws above enumerated, high ranking members of the legal and other professions are called upon to give talks before the groups. Thus invitations are extended to judges and attorneys to discuss marriage and divorce laws, wills and estates, real property

laws, etc.—to the Juvenile Court judge to discuss the responsibilities of parents towards children and the laws concerning the compulsory education of children. Other discussions are led by insurance men, labor leaders and real estate people. In addition, students visit the marriage clinic and the courts.

Concerning the laws governing travel, the students get into related subjects involving hotel law and the various guest rules. They enhance their knowledge by gathering up copies of hotel rules for guests, samples of travel insurance policies, and by interviewing hotel managers, bus drivers, airline pilots and train conductors.

It can be readily seen that such a program in the last year of high school, whether the student goes on to college or goes immediately into the work-a-day world, makes for a better understanding by those students of the high place the legal profession has in a community.

Aware of the success that this course has enjoyed at West High School, the Denver Bar Association Committee on Public Relations is undertaking to formulate a plan whereby similar courses can be introduced in the parochial and public high schools in Denver and in high schools throughout the state. It may be that because of fixed curricula it will take considerable time to work in such a program in the other schools. A good start, however, can be made next September by offering to the various schools lawyer-lecturers to talk on the various subjects that demonstrate the everyday laws which touch the citizen in everything he does throughout the day. Starting with the vital statistics regulations which make necessary the registration of his birth, and ending with the laws and regulations governing where and how deep he shall be buried, the citizen lives under statutory regulations and fundamental legal and moral obligations so numerous that he is hardly conscious of them as such and takes most of them for granted.

Many citizens go through their span of life getting into trouble, losing money or paying usurious interest without ever obtaining legal advice from its most logical source, the lawyer. But it is probably predictable that few, if any, of the future citizens from West High School will ignore or shy away from the legal profession when it comes to their daily transactions. So if our Committee on Public Relations can expand its program to include the youth of the city, all of them—potential clients of the future—will have a better understanding of and a better feeling towards the legal profession. That's the best kind of public relations.

The Book Trader's Corner

For historical purposes, or otherwise, James E. Taylor, Sharon Springs, Kansas, attorney has "a set of Corpus Juris Cyc" for sale.