



Paul C. Whipp

1882-1966

Founder of the
Letitia M. Whip Memorial Fund in
The New York Community Trust
909 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

In 1972, the will of Paul C. Whipp established the Letitia M. Whip Memorial Fund in The New York Community Trust.

The sandy-haired young man paced back and forth in his dormitory room. He checked and re-checked the time on his gold pocket watch. He checked and re-checked his appearance in the mirror above the bureau. For the long-awaited Parlor Night had finally arrived. It was the one night each month when a large, brightly-lighted room of the Western Maryland College library was declared neutral territory. There, students of both sexes could come together and make each other's acquaintance.

The occasion was anything but a casual one. Western Maryland at the turn of the century was a co-educational institution, but so austere were its rules that boys and girls attending the same classes were seated on opposite sides of the classroom. And — except on Parlor Night — they were forbidden to socialize on campus.

Paul Whipp checked the face on his watch and the face in the mirror one last time, then strode off toward the library. A methodical person, he had rehearsed in advance the conversational gambit he intended to follow so that no time would be wasted. His target for the evening had already been chosen: A bright-eyed young woman named Mary had caught Paul's eye. They had many of the same classes together, and, although the classroom arrangement and strict campus regulations kept them apart, Paul already knew a great deal about Mary. He was certain, for example, that she was the smartest girl in the class, always well prepared with a quick, well-thought-out reply when the professor called upon her. She was demure and lady-like, too. When, as seemed to happen frequently, she caught Paul looking at her from the other side of the classroom, she blushed and lowered her eyes.

Paul must have made an equally fine impression on Mary. A slightly-built young man with keen blue eyes and an unassuming manner, Paul Cullen Whipp was born January 28, 1882, in Jefferson, Maryland, a town not far from Frederick. (Originally the family name of Whip was spelled with a single p; Paul later added a second p and spelled

it *Whipp*.) He was the eldest of three children. Next came a sister, Ethel, and a brother, George William Preston, whom the family called Pres. While Pres was still a baby, the children's father died. The baby was sent to live with his grandparents, and Paul and Ethel stayed with their mother. Although they saw their younger brother often, Paul and Ethel, who were only two years apart in age, were especially close. The bond they established during their growing-up years endured throughout their lives.

In 1900, Paul graduated from high school and entered Western Maryland College in Westminster. He enrolled in the historical curriculum, which would prepare him for the study of law. Although he was a quiet person, professors as well as fellow students — including Mary — recognized that he was one of the best scholars in the class. His year book referred to Paul as "perhaps the ablest man among us."

When the two "best students" finally became acquainted one Parlor Night, they began to bring a great deal of pleasure into each other's lives. Soon they were finding ways to spend much of their free time together. However, Paul had many other interests besides Mary. He won recognition as an outstanding orator in the college debating society. His flair for writing earned him distinction as class poet, editor-in-chief of the college monthly, and editor of the year book. Somehow he found time to serve as football manager. And his classmates thought highly enough of Paul to elect him president of the Class of 1904.

Everybody seemed to know how much Paul and Mary cared about each other (the year book teased that Paul's favorite pastime was "smiling, especially at Mary"). Yet suddenly the romance was over and no one knew why. Paul was such a taciturn individual that he could not bring himself to talk about what had happened. Instead, he spent still more of his time buried in his studies, relaxing only with solitary drives into the country. "All one ever saw him do was work, work, work," a classmate recalled.

After graduation with an A.B. degree in 1904, Paul taught public school for two years in Middletown, Maryland, only a few miles from his home town. Then, in 1906, he went away to Harvard Law School, from which he graduated three years later.

After Harvard, Paul went immediately to New York, where he and a partner established a law practice. A quiet man, Paul possessed a first-rate intelligence and an enormous capacity for labor. Colleagues and adversaries alike admired the thoroughness of his preparation and his monumental knowledge of the law. He possessed an uncanny ability to anticipate surprise moves by the opposition. In fact, clients who knew him as quiet and subdued in ordinary conversation were startled by his superb oratorical abilities before the court. And he was noted for his effectiveness in negotiation for the settlement of controversial matters to avoid litigation.

Because of his extraordinary talents, Paul Whipp had soon earned an international reputation as a fine general practitioner of law. Most of his work was in corporate, commercial and estate law. During the 1930's and early 1940's, the major portion of his time involved representation of the surviving directors of a Russian fire insurance company. Although the firm had been liquidated by the Communists following the Revolution of 1917, substantial assets were on deposit with the Superintendent of Insurance in the State of New York. The litigation involving these assets continued for a number of years and was complicated by the United States's recognition of the USSR, which claimed the assets, but ultimately Paul Whipp's firm was successful.

Paul Whipp's career spanned nearly half a century, covering two World Wars and a Great Depression. As the years passed, the name of Paul Whipp's firm changed several times as partnerships were formed and dissolved, but always the firm bearing his name was among the most prestigious.

Soon after he had established himself professionally in Manhattan, his mother and sister sold the family home in Maryland and, at his insistence, joined him in New York. He made a comfortable home on New York's Upper West Side for Ethel and Mrs. Whip (who continued to spell her name with a single "p" as did her younger son, after Paul and Ethel changed theirs). Eventually he bought a small cottage in the Adirondacks, where they spent frequent weekends. When Paul's international cases involved trips to Europe, as they often did, Ethel and Mrs. Whip frequently went along.

Paul never married. Some thought he remained

a bachelor because he never again met a girl he thought as much of as his college sweetheart, Mary. Instead of marriage and a family of his own, he devoted his life to his profession and to caring for his mother, until her death, and his sister. And he kept in frequent contact with his younger brother, Pres, who himself became a lawyer in Baltimore and specialized in the practice of admiralty law.

Paul Whipp was always active with his college alumni association, and at the 1954 commencement exercises, on the anniversary of his fiftieth year of graduation from Western Maryland, his alma mater celebrated the event by conferring on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Two years later, Paul Whipp retired from his law practice. For a while, he and his sister Ethel continued to live in their New York apartment, keeping actively involved in the neighborhood Lutheran church of which they had been members for years. But Paul and Ethel were, by then, well into their seventies, and they longed for a quieter life than they could find in bustling Manhattan. In 1959 they bought a modest little house in West Hempstead, Long Island, and moved out of the city and into the suburbs.

The years passed quietly for them both. Ethel had developed glaucoma, and as her eyesight steadily worsened, she was less able to get about. Although failing health kept him from the rigorous "work, work, work" philosophy that had guided his life, Paul always managed to keep busy. He rediscovered gardening, which he had not attempted since boyhood, and he puttered contentedly in the small yard. He liked to walk the quiet, tree-lined streets, greeting his neighbors with a nod and a few friendly words.

Then, inevitably, time and ill-health overtook him. In December of 1965, Paul and Ethel journeyed to Hollywood, Florida, hoping that the mild winter there would restore some of their health and vigor. On January 28, Paul observed his 84th birthday. Soon after that his condition worsened, and, when pneumonia developed, he was taken to the hospital. Paul C. Whipp died quietly there on February 25, 1966, his loyal sister Ethel by his side.

Ethel Whipp, lonely and heartbroken, returned to their home in West Hempstead, but she was no longer able to live alone. Nearly blind, she soon moved into a quiet residential hotel in East Orange, New Jersey, where she lived for six more years until

her death on August 4, 1972, at the age of 86.

Paul Whipp had lived a conservative, productive life. He was always more conscious of the needs of others than of his own needs, and he wanted this caring to continue, even after his death. In particular, he was concerned for the welfare of children and the elderly — those who most need help from others who are strong and in their prime. By his will, Paul Whipp arranged for this thoughtful caring to be extended to others in ever-widening, always helpful circles. And in loving respect for his mother, he arranged for the fund to be named as a memorial to her.



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