Washington Attorney Joins MSU Faculty

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WASHINGTON ATTORNEY JOINS MSU FACULTY

A Washington, D.C., attorney of wide experience in writing briefs for cases in the U.S. Supreme Court will arrive in Missoula Saturday to join the Montana State University Law School faculty for the rest of the school year, Dean Robert E. Sullivan announced.

John F. Cotter, former assistant chief of the Appellate Section of the Lands Division of the Department of Justice, will take over the direction of the moot court program in the Law School, Dean Sullivan said. He will teach courses in the writing of briefs that were given last year by the late Oscar A. Provost.

The moot court, an appellate rather than a trial tribunal, hears cases that are appealed from decisions of a lower court, Dean Sullivan explained. Every freshman in the MSU Law School must participate in at least one moot court argument, and juniors who have not completed more than three semesters of law study are also required to take part. They may also enter a voluntary competition scheduled for next fall.

The principal purposes of the program are to develop proficiency in legal research, legal writing, and oral argument, Dean Sullivan said.

The moot court program in the Law School is integrated with the national program administered by the Bar Assn. of the City of New York. Under this system, the law schools in each of the ten judicial circuits meet and argue a common legal problem each fall. In 1956, MSU, represented by Neil S. Keefer and Richmond F. Allan, won the regional competition in Salem, Ore. The Montana team's brief, drafted under Professor Provost's supervision, was awarded a "very high" rating.
Cotter Appointed to Law Faculty, page two

at the national finals in New York City in December.

As an attorney for the Department of Justice from 1939 until his retirement from the federal service in 1955, Cotter wrote and revised briefs for cases in all the U. S. Courts of Appeals as well as in the Supreme Court. During his World War II Army service he was assigned to the Office of the Judge Advocate General for a year, and he spent another year with the Second Army Headquarters in Lebanon, Tenn. From July 1944 until his army retirement as a major in June 1946, he was a member of Claims Commissions in Normandy, Chanor, and the United Kingdom Base Sections, adjudicating claims of friendly aliens against the United States. He was president of the United Kingdom Base Sections Commission.

Born in Washington, D. C. in 1900, Cotter was educated in the public schools there. After a stint as a private in the Army in 1918, he continued his education in Washington and received an LL.B from Catholic University of America in 1921. In 1923, he left the firm of patent attorneys with whom he began his legal career to accept an appointment as clerk to Justice Pierce Butler of the Supreme Court. He was associated with Justice Butler until the latter's death in 1939, and he served as administrator of his estate from 1940-42.

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