

Oscar DeForest Clarke

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Oscar D. Clarke Dies; Served as High Court Librarian Many Years

Oscar D. Clarke, 71, librarian of the Supreme Court, died early today at his home, 3034 Newark street N.W.



Mr. Clarke had been librarian since February 1, 1915, when he succeeded his father, H.D. Clarke, who held the position many years. He had served as assistant librarian from March 1, 1900 until his promotion.

A native of Washington, he received a bachelor of law degree from Columbian College, now George Washington University, in 1898.

Mr. Clarke counted among his friends 37 of the 85 justices who served on the Nation's highest tribunal during his many years of service. He was librarian under Chief Justices Fuller, White, Taft, Hughes, Stone and Vison, and knew all of them.

When Mr. Clarke became head of the library, it was small and housed in a rather obscure part of the Capitol. He was the only member of the "staff" and had only a messenger to help him. In those days, each justice had only one or two assistants and so often visited the library themselves to do some research work.

After moving to the new Supreme Court building, Mr. Clarke supervised the enlargement of the library and saw it grow in importance also as members of the tribunal came to depend on it more and more. At the time of his death he had a staff of nine assistants.

He was a member of the American Association of Law Libraries.

Mr. Clarke had spent his summers in Maine for many years and was a member of the Rotary Club in Skowhegan.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Imogene Clarke.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Hines funeral home, 2901 Fourteenth street N.W., with Canon Curtis Draper of Washington Cathedral officiating. Burial will be in Congressional Cemetery.