Hon. James Hay Reed
(b. Sept. 10, 1853; d. June 17, 1927)

Trustee of the Carnegie Library and of the Carnegie Institute.
March 28, 1902—June 17, 1927.
OBITUARY

Hon. James Hay Reed

On Friday, June 7, 1927, toward sunset, James Hay Reed passed away in the seventy-fourth year of his age. His death ended a life crowded with achievements, illustrious through its exemplification of the best traits of human character, and enriched by the love and admiration of his fellowmen.

Judge Reed, simple, unaffected, retiring in manner, was a power not only in the city where he lived, but throughout the state and the land. As a jurist, he excelled in his knowledge of the law; as an interpreter of the law, he reasoned closely and correctly; regnant throughout all his mental processes were "faith, hope, and charity." He was the confidant, counsellor, and friend alike of the rich and of the poor. Many of the greatest enterprises of this country were helped and guided by him, while the humblest citizen could approach him with the assurance of a friendly reception, and wise advice in time of trouble. He was a devoted husband and father. He was a loyal friend.

Of his achievements as a lawyer and the guiding mind in great industrial and financial undertakings this is not, perhaps, the place to speak. His name is "writ large" in the story of the development of many of the greatest corporations which exist today upon the continent.

We here speak of the relationship which he held to the Carnegie Library and the Carnegie Institute. He was elected a member of the Board of Trustees of the Library on March 28, 1902, as the successor of the late David McCargo, and thus automatically became a Trustee of the Carnegie Institute. He was elected Treasurer of the Institute on October 23, 1903 (without bond and without compensation), and continued to hold that position until the day of his death.

From the beginning of his membership in the Board he was a member of the Finance Committee, and served at various times as a member of the Committee upon the Museum, the Committee upon Fine Arts, and the Committee upon the Technical Schools, later named The Carnegie Institute of Technology. He freely devoted a
great deal of his time and thought to the work of the two Boards. To the generous contributions which he made of his powers is due much of the success of the various undertakings confided to the care of the Trustees. His clarity of judgment, his gentle persuasiveness, his transparent integrity of purpose, his unquestionable love of all that is excellent gave him a commanding position among his fellows, and it was often said that his word was finally accepted as expressing the best judgment in cases of doubt and uncertainty.

Judge Reed walked on the highest planes of integrity. On one occasion Mr. Carnegie, speaking before a most distinguished audience, said: “Then there is Judge Reed, the Treasurer without bond. Ladies and Gentlemen, even all the reports in these days of failure to perform fiduciary duties have never moved me to ask a bond from Judge Reed. If he should fail, I should feel as Shakespeare’s Henry V did, when he said of Lord Scroop, ‘For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like another fall of man’.” At the close of the negotiations for the sale of Mr. Carnegie’s properties to the United States Steel Corporation, to the details of which Judge Reed attended, the latter with Mr. R. A. Franks, Mr. Carnegie’s Secretary, found themselves one day in company with Mr. Carnegie, and some hundreds of millions in bonds piled up before them. Mr. Carnegie suddenly said: “I am off! I am going to Europe. I leave you in charge of these things.” The Judge exclaimed, “But we should give you a receipt for these bonds.” “Never mind about that,” said Mr. Carnegie, “I trust you,” and vanished through the door, leaving his astonished friends in custody of what at that time was said to be the largest individual fortune in the world, without exacting a line of acknowledgment. Mr. Carnegie was a splendid judge of human nature.

The incidents just related illustrate the moral qualities of Judge Reed and the confidence reposed in him by those who knew him best. His career imparted lustre to American manhood. He has left to his family the inheritance of a noble name, and to his friends every memory of him is sweetly fragrant.
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