OBITUARY.

HON. JOHN DOUGLAS SHAFER

With deepest sorrow we record the death on October 12, 1926, of the Honorable John Douglas Shafer. Judge Shafer became a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute in 1898. He continuously served as a member of the Committee upon the Museum from the year 1902; and from March 4, 1910, was the Vice-President of the Board of Trustees.

Judge Shafer was born December 6, 1848. His father was the pastor of the Associate Reformed (later United Presbyterian) Church at Deer Creek, Allegheny County. His mother, whose maiden name was Maria D. Harper, was a woman of great intelligence and strong character. He received his early education in the district schools of the neighborhood, supplemented by the teaching of his father and mother. His father supervised his preparation for college, teaching him Latin and Greek and the elements of higher mathematics. His mother inspired him with a love for the best in English literature and encouraged his taste for the study of nature. He was, like many other men who have risen to eminence, a son of the parsonage. In his fourteenth year, he successfully passed his examinations for admission to Jefferson College, graduating in the class of 1866 in his eighteenth year. Although he was the youngest man in the class, composed of forty men, he took the highest honors.

For a year after graduation he pursued the study of Greek and Hebrew in the United Presbyterian Seminary in Allegheny. He then left the Seminary and for three years successfully taught school in Westmoreland, Washington, and Allegheny Counties.

On September 7, 1870, he registered as a student of law with the firm of James I. Kuhn and James Evans in Pittsburgh. While reading law he gave instruction in Latin, and from 1873 to 1874 served as professor of the Greek language and literature in Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa. He was formally admitted to the bar on January 17, 1874. He soon acquired an extensive practice; and, as the years passed by, came to be known as one of the leading attorneys in the city of Pittsburgh.

In 1894 he was chosen as the first Dean of the Faculty of Law in
the Western University of Pennsylvania (now the University of Pittsburgh). The Law School of the University of Pittsburgh owes its success and high standing to his labors and the labors of the men whom he wisely associated with himself in the Faculty. In the year 1920 he retired from the more active duties of the Deanship, and was made Dean Emeritus, in which capacity he continued to give valuable service and advice until his death.

On May 9, 1897, he was appointed by Governor Daniel H. Hastings to fill the vacancy on the bench of Allegheny County created by the death of Judge Thomas Ewing. In the following November he was elected to the judgeship for a full term of ten years, beginning January 1, 1898; and thereafter in 1907 and in 1917, was twice re-elected without opposition. The four courts of Common Pleas of Allegheny County were consolidated on January 1, 1912. When on January 4, 1915, Judge R. S. Frazer took his seat as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Judge Shafer succeeded him as President Judge of the Courts of Common Pleas of Allegheny County and continued in this position until his death.

As a lawyer Judge Shafer enjoyed a most enviable reputation for learning, probity, and kindness among those with whom he was brought into contact. He was literally adored by the younger members of the legal profession, who in later years came to speak of him familiarly among themselves as “Father Shafer.”

From his childhood Judge Shafer was deeply interested in nature and especially in botany, the study of which he pursued with ardent. He was one of the founders of the Western Pennsylvania Botanical Society. He was familiarly acquainted with the flora of western Pennsylvania and the collections of the Carnegie Museum contain much material gathered by his hands. He had a broad general knowledge of natural history, and, though botany was his specialty, he was able to enter with understanding into the discussion of questions relating to the natural sciences in general.

Judge Shafer was an accomplished linguist, familiar with the ancient classics and with many of the modern languages, which he read with ease, and some of which he spoke.

As a Trustee of the Carnegie Institute and particularly as a member of the Committee upon the Museum he rendered distinguished services. His intelligent comprehension of the varied matters, which from time to time came up for discussion, made his counsel most valuable. His
death removed from their midst one of their wisest counsellors and they will sorely miss his genial presence. Though burdened with cares and duties beyond the ordinary lot of men, he never failed to maintain that air of good humor and that friendly interest in those about him, which endeared him to all who knew him.

Judge Shafer was twice married. His first wife was Miss Rosa Strauss of Washington County, whom he married on September 27, 1877. She died in the fall of 1897, shortly after his elevation to the bench. On June 20, 1901, he married Mrs. Maud B. Gifford of Lincoln, Nebraska, whose acquaintance he had formed at Cambridge, Massachusetts, while attending a convention of botanists. Mrs. Shafer survives him.

To Mrs. Shafer, her friends in the Carnegie Museum extend their kindest and deepest sympathy in this hour of affliction and loneliness.