



A Man and a Monument

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We are all familiar with the statues we find in local parks acknowledging the contributions of local citizens or national heroes. Likewise, we have all driven by or through cemeteries with row upon row of tombstones honoring the dead. These, we say, are monuments dedicated to those who have gone before us!!

There are those among us, however, who strive for monuments of another kind. John Lothrop Motley, a 19th century American historian put it well, as he said:

"Monuments! What are they? The very pyramids have forgotten their builders, or to whom they were dedicated. Deeds, not stones, are the true monuments of the great."

The founder of this unique and vibrant organization which we now call "The International Right of Way Association" is among those we can call "great" for this very Association continues and prospers as a living monument to his unselfish dedication to bettering his profession and benefiting his fellow man.

Frank C. Balfour was truly deserving of the title "Founder" which was bestowed upon him by our Association in the drafting of our By-laws. It was his inspired leadership and his enthusiasm which first breathed life into this organization. A reference to the July, 1937 edition of this publication discloses the following excerpt from our history: "It was on one hot day, that 5th day of September, 1934, that George A. Mitchell, Chief Right of Way Agent of the Los Angeles County Road Department, and his men responded to an invitation by Frank C. Balfour,

Chief of the California State Highway Department's Right of Way force, to all join in a luncheon at the old Taix Restaurant, Los Angeles. This luncheon proved to be a great event, for it was the beginning of Los Angeles Chapter 1 of the American Right of Way Association. Those who attended this first Right of Way luncheon, the first of its kind to ever be held, were Frank C. Balfour, our genial host; E. N. Whittemore, Elton F. Wagner, J. F. Walsh, J. H. Plotzke and Louis Felix, all of the State Highway Department, and George A. Mitchell, William J. Overman, Charles E. Hall, Edward M. Richbourg, Louis A. Griley, John C. Webb and Ralph F. Beegan, all from the Los Angeles County Road Department. This initial gathering of "thirteen" has "spelled" the overwhelming success - at least in the minds of some, for the skyrocket career this Los Angeles Chapter has had since this first meeting, and this marvelous success of the organization is highly attributable to the dynamic energy and wonderful personality made manifest by the association's first leader and President, Frank C. Balfour, who will always be remembered as "Father" of the American Right of Way Association."

And remembered he has been!! His gruff but jolly manner was the perfect combination with his enthusiastic leadership ability to make him one to whom you could not help but look to for friendship, guidance and inspiration.

One needs only to look to our Code of Ethics to know the character of the man who was our leader during our formative years. His theory of practice for his profession was simple - service to the public and

adherence to the "Golden Rule". These were the guidelines for his own career and became those which he brought to this new creation of his.

Frank Balfour's name is one well remembered also by the Department of Transportation of his beloved State of California for his career with that Department (then known as the California Division of Highways) was one of outstanding service. Rising to the position of Chief Right of Way Agent, he formed and led a Right of Way Department which in time became the model for other states to copy.

I'm sure that even he, with his great vision and dreams for the future, was amazed at the growth of his fledgling "Southern California Right of Way Agent's Association" from its inception in Los Angeles with 13 members to the "American Right of Way Association" and on to the "International Right of Way Association" serving some 10,000 members from Alaska to Florida and from New Brunswick to Hawaii.

Our good friend, on September 29, 1978 took on the assignment to acquire right of way in the clouds but until the time of his death his inspiration, his ideals, and his principles influenced every decision of those leaders who followed him at the helm of our Association and the memories of those ideals and principles continue to influence decisions today.

Truly, as deeds are the monuments of the great - Frank C. Balfour, our Founder, must be numbered among the greatest and we, the members of the International Right of Way Association, both today and in the years to come, are part of the living monument to his greatness.