

WHELDON, Sir WYNN POWELL (1879 - 1961), lawyer, soldier, administrator

Name: Wynn Powell Wheldon
Date of birth: 1879
Date of death: 1961
Spouse: Megan Wheldon (née Edwards)
Child: Nans Wheldon
Child: Mair Wheldon
Child: Tomas Powell Wheldon
Child: Huw Pyrs Wheldon
Parent: Mary Elinor Wheldon (née Powell)
Parent: Thomas Jones Wheldon
Gender: Male
Occupation: lawyer, soldier, administrator
Area of activity: Law; Military; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: John Gwynn Williams

Born 22 December 1879, son of the **Rev. Thomas Jones Wheldon** and Mary Elinor Powell, Bronygraig, Ffestiniog, Meirionnydd. He was educated at Friars School, Bangor, the High School, Oswestry, the University College of North Wales - he was the first secretary of the Students' Representative Council, 1899 - B.A. 1900, and at St. John's College, Cambridge (B.A. and LL.B., 1903, M.A. in 1920). In 1906 he began his career as a lawyer in 63 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC. He joined a number of London's Welsh societies (among them the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion) and soon became well acquainted with the city's influential Welshmen. He speedily and unhesitatingly enlisted in the army and served in the 14th Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in France from December 1914 until December 1918. As major and second in command, he was wounded, his bravery being mentioned in dispatches and recognised by the D.S.O. in 1917. He was Secretary and Registrar of Bangor College from 1919 until 1933 when he was appointed Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education. He retired in 1945 but there was no diminution of his public work, the following being but examples of his unremitting service: Chairman of the Welsh Committee, Festival of Britain, 1951; Chairman of the Council of School Broadcasting for Wales, member of the Court and Council of the University of Wales, Vice-President of the University Council of North Wales and President of the Cymmrodorion Society. In 1939 he was knighted, and appointed K.B.E. in 1952; the University of Wales conferred upon him the degree of Doctor in legibus (honoris causa) in 1947 and the Cymmrodorion Society its Medal in 1955. He died at Prestatyn on 10 November 1961 and his will was proved on 18 January 1962.

On account of his shrewdness and balanced judgement he was a splendid administrator and he was able to 'manage' affairs without fuss and bustle. He disliked pomp and vulgarity, and he never suffered fools gladly. Yet he was essentially a warm-hearted man and a true friend. He understood the feelings and aspirations of his countrymen, in committees and on the field of battle, in religion and in politics. He clung faithfully to the Calvinistic Methodist denomination; the chief beneficiary of his will (apart from the family) was Tabernacl, Bangor (his father's former church). He was a leading layman in his denomination. His guidance and experience proved crucial in his chairmanship of the Commission on Education for the Ministry (1961), and also in the discussions which led to the setting up of the United Theological College, Aberystwyth. He was a handsome, dignified man, there is a **pencil drawing of him** by S. Morse Brown, a portrait by **Kyffin Williams** (1955), and a bust by Kustec Wojnarowski (1958) (in the Council Chamber of Bangor College, and another in the Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden).

He married Megan Edwards, Canonbury, Prestatyn, daughter of Hugh Edwards, London, 31 July 1915. They had two sons, Huw Pyrs and Tomas Powell (who died a few months before his father) and two daughters, Mair and Nans.

Author

Professor John Gwynn Williams

Sources

Who's who?, 1961

Who was who?, 1951-60

Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, and Companionage, 1961

The Times, 13, 15 November 1961

'Presentation of the Cymmrodorion Medal to Sir Wynn Wheldon, K.B.E., D.S.O., LL.D., President of the Society' *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1956, 11-17

'Sir Wynn P. Wheldon, K.B.E., D.S.O., LL.D., President 1953-60: An appreciation' *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1962, 161-69

Personal knowledge

information from his daughter Mrs Mair Rees

His papers and diaries are in the Library of the University of Wales, Bangor

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