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V. F. Huebner, S.S. - Wife

You'll be interested to know that....

## It's Just 'Readjusting Life', Not 'Retiring' To Dr. Huebner After 49 Years at Penn

By PETER H. BINZEN  
Of The Bulletin Staff

One night in 1904 a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, did some late reading which set his head buzzing.

It came from the New York Journal of Commerce, whose pages are generally more statistical than inspirational.

Yet it was these very statistics—pages and pages of them relating to insurance and securities, which caught the student's eye.

"It flashed through my mind that here was a field totally untouched by the colleges and universities," recalls Dr. Solomon Stephen Huebner.

### Results of Inspiration

As a result of that flash:

(1) Dr. Huebner, then 22 and job-hunting, suggested that the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania offer a regularly-scheduled course in insurance.

(2) University of Pennsylvania Provost Charles Custis Harrison, wealthy sugar refiner, liked the idea "right off the bat," but wondered who could teach the new course.

(3) Dr. Huebner, who had teaching offers from such places as Tokyo Imperial University, the University of the Philippines and Philadelphia's Central High School, turned them all down and took the new post.

(4) He stayed on the job for 49 years, teaching some 75,000 students, winning a reputation as the nation's No. 1 professor of insurance and seeing his "flash" spread to schools across the country.

On the 30th of this month he officially retires from the Penn faculty to become an emeritus professor of insurance the next day.

His going will take from the university one of its best-loved and most respected figures and its senior professor.

### Met Early Opposition

Reflecting on all this the other day, Dr. Huebner recalled that the sailing wasn't always smooth. At the very start there was opposition to his idea that insurance men—both office and field workers—should be college-trained, like lawyers, accountants, architects and other professional people.

This was a new idea in 1904 and it didn't sit well with the insurance companies, most of whose officers lacked college diplomas.

"The industry men didn't have much use for the academic men and I guess it worked vice versa," he said.



Dr. Solomon Stephen Huebner

But times changed, a college diploma became a necessary possession of job-seekers and the insurance companies came to see the value of what Dr. Huebner was trying to do.

As a result, more than 100 of them in 1940 set up the S.S. Huebner Foundation to provide fellowships for would-be teachers of insurance.

And many made substantial contributions toward the construction of the Wharton School's Dietrich Hall, 37th and Locust sts., which opened last fall and houses the insurance department.

This department now has a faculty of 14, all but two of whom studied under the white-haired, mustached one-time farm boy from Mantiowoc, Wisconsin.

### Author of Many Books

Heading the department from 1915-1952, writing a score of books and reports on insurance, at times helping the Government on ticklish problems of marine and airplane insurance and lecturing in his spare time in 47 states, Dr. Huebner has also been called on to counsel his colleagues and students on the leading question: "How much insurance do you think I should have?"

"They 'phone, write and ask me personally," he said. "It's been going on for years, and I've never sold a policy."

He's never sold one, because he has never represented a specific

insurance company but he's proven to be a great salesman for the business generally.

### Dollar Value on Lives

He advises heads of families to "put a dollar value" on their lives and make provision to protect the "investment," just as a man gets insurance to protect his house against fire or theft.

"Some people think the idea of putting a dollar value on human life is shocking and brutal," he said, "but it's only sensible. For a man's family life is a business, economically speaking, and should be organized, run and liquidated like one."

Dr. Huebner, who was 71 last March 6, has held to this philosophy throughout his teaching career, although his father didn't have any insurance.

### Loves Red Neckties

And he is steadfast toward things other than ideas. He has never been known, for example, to wear other than red neckties.

"I've got boxes full of them," he said, conceding that he has been wearing lighter shades in recent years "when the Commies made the color unpopular."

A straight-backed, oak-pegged rocking chair has served him faithfully since 1927, when it was given to him by his colleagues in the department.

"Wonderful exercise," he says. "I don't realize I'm doing it but I'm always on the move."

Retirement will mean more time with his wife, the former Ethel Mudie whom he married on June 24, 1908, more time for reading Dickens and Shakespeare and for working on his collection of minerals in his home at 697 S. Highland av., Merion.

### Rejects Word 'Retirement'

But Dr. Huebner insists he's "readjusting" his life, not retiring.

He will continue to work with the American College of Life Underwriters, 3924 Walnut st., which he helped found in 1927 and headed from 1934 to last year. The college annually sets up insurance examinations in some 125 colleges and universities.

He also hopes to get back on the lecture circuit, though not at his 50,000-mile-a-year pace of some years ago.

All in all, it adds up to a busy "retirement," which is what Dr. Huebner wants.

"I'd fade away physically if I quit," he said. "And I owe it to this nation to keep on prodding. If everybody worked more we wouldn't have all the troubles we've got today."

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