

110TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 451

Honoring the achievements of Rawle and Henderson LLP, on its 225th anniversary and on being recognized as the oldest law firm in continuous practice in the United States.

---

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 13, 2008

Mr. SPECTER (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution;  
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

---

# RESOLUTION

Honoring the achievements of Rawle and Henderson LLP,  
on its 225th anniversary and on being recognized as  
the oldest law firm in continuous practice in the United  
States.

Whereas the law firm of Rawle and Henderson LLP has established and maintained a firm of national distinction whose reputation is based upon the notable accomplishments of its founders and its commitment to providing quality legal services to its clients;

Whereas Rawle and Henderson LLP celebrates 225 years of legal service in 2008, initiated by 5 generations of a family and expanded to over 100 attorneys in 8 offices and 5 states;

Whereas Rawle and Henderson attorneys throughout the last 225 years have served both the civic and legal community in the capacity of elected officials, as well as appointed and elected judges on the Federal and State benches;

Whereas William Rawle, who founded his practice in Philadelphia in 1783, was inspired by the innovation of the Revolutionary era and his notable contemporaries, such as Benjamin Franklin;

Whereas William Rawle actively participated in the ideological revolution as well, serving as chancellor of the Associated Members of the Bar of Philadelphia, and was elected to the American Philosophical Society and helped found the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts;

Whereas William Rawle was made a Trustee by the University of Pennsylvania in 1796, a position he served with “zeal and punctuality”;

Whereas William Rawle’s son, William Rawle, Jr., joined the office in 1810, along with his brother William Henry, who eventually assumed his father’s position in the firm;

Whereas William Henry Rawle received his degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and published articles such as the “Practical Treatise on the Law of Covenants for Title”, which was accepted as a legal authority throughout the Union and in England;

Whereas William Henry Rawle was also invited to speak to the law department of his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1884 he appeared before a joint session of Congress to deliver a speech honoring Chief Justice John Marshall;

Whereas William Henry Rawle served as vice president of the Law Association of Philadelphia, and was noted by

George Washington Biddle for his “intellectual strength and brilliancy of expression”;

Whereas William Rawle’s grandson Francis Rawle, the next leader of the Rawle law offices, attended Harvard College, began his law career in 1873, and was one of the founders of the American Bar Association and its first secretary and treasurer, later becoming its president in 1902;

Whereas Francis Rawle was a prolific author who gained national recognition with his revision of Bouvier’s Law Dictionary, the publication of which coincided with the centennial of the Rawle firm in 1883, and he served as a delegate from the American Bar Association to the London Conference for Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations in 1887;

Whereas Colonel William Brooke Rawle, nephew of William Henry, served his country with distinction during the Civil War, entering the Union Army as Second Lieutenant, Third Pennsylvania Cavalry, was commended by his cousin Francis Rawle for his service, and went on to earn a master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1866 and to join the family firm a year later, remaining the head of the office until his death in 1915;

Whereas Joseph W. Henderson joined the Rawle firm upon graduation from Harvard Law School, expanding the firm’s reputation for legal excellence and eventually becoming a partner in 1917;

Whereas, in similar fashion to his colleagues, Joseph Henderson reached a position of considerable power in the Philadelphia Bar Association and became chairman of the Association’s Board of Governors in 1936;

Whereas Joseph Henderson carried on the firm’s tradition of leadership upon the passing of Francis Rawle, and oversaw 2 other significant additions, George Brodhead and Tom Mount, who worked in trusts and estates and the admiralty business, respectively;

Whereas Joseph Henderson continued to lead the firm with landmark cases in the area of ship owner liability, arguing many of them before the Supreme Court;

Whereas the Rawle and Henderson firm has evolved into one of the leading legal firms in the country, employing a racially and socioeconomically diverse staff, and has a number of attorneys honored as “Super Lawyers” in Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, supported upon the integrity of its founders and the numerous accomplishments of the Rawle family and of Joseph W. Henderson, the firm of Rawle and Henderson is primed to extend its history and tradition of legal innovation into a future of continued prominence: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) commemorates the achievement of Rawle  
3       and Henderson LLP on its 225th anniversary and  
4       on being recognized as the oldest law firm in continuous  
5       practice in the United States; and

6               (2) salutes the profound legacy the attorneys of  
7       Rawle and Henderson LLP have provided to the  
8       civic and legal community of Pennsylvania and the  
9       Nation.

○