



Justice Robert Jackson listens to testimony at the Nuremberg Trials, 1946.
Behind him, over his right shoulder, is Col. Robert J. Gill, Executive Officer for the trials.

organized the trials, arranged for the innovative simultaneous translations needed to make the trials run smoothly and efficiently, and dealt with the subsequent imprisonment of the Nazi war criminals.

For his service in World War II and at Nuremberg, Gill received the Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Service Medal from the United States, and, among medals from other nations, the Third Order of the White Lion from Czechoslovakia. He was also promoted to the rank of brigadier general on the recommendation of Justice Jackson and nomination of President Harry S. Truman. Jackson cited Gill's outstanding performance in the position of executive officer, which, he said, contributed "in vital measure to the success of the trials at Nürnberg." It was because of this personal relationship that Gill was able to persuade Jackson to come to the college in December 1946 to speak and receive an honorary degree. It was also because of all he had done in his varied career that Gill himself was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the 1947 commencement.

During his extended stay in Europe, Gill became interested in collecting stamps, and like everything he undertook, he did it well, thoroughly, and exhaustively. He won a silver award at the first

stamp show he ever attended and two gold medals at an international show in New York in 1956. He once put together a group of stamps issued by France between 1849 and 1880 that was described as the finest collection of classical French stamps ever assembled. At his death the entire collection was willed to WMC and sold for over a million dollars. Gill served on the board of trustees of the Philatelic Foundation and was an authority on classic philatelic rarities. He was also a world-class bridge player and served as president and chairman of the board of the American Contract Bridge League.

The life-long bachelor once said, ironically, that he never had the courage to get married, even though he was described as a "lion among the ladies" in college. Long after his playing days were over, Gill remained a sports fan. Shortly after the Orioles franchise was moved to Baltimore from St. Louis, he joined the board of directors and was selected its secretary. He remained on the board until the team was sold to Edward Bennett Williams.

Gill remained active in sports and business affairs into his late 80s. In 1953 he brokered the sale of the adjacent Westminster Theological Seminary property to WMC, several years before the seminary moved to Washington, taking the name Wesley Theological Seminary. At age 88, as Gill was recovering from intestinal surgery at Union Memorial Hospital, he was visited by a friend and trustee who brought him a football. It was the game ball from the previous Saturday's annual contest with rival Johns Hopkins that the Western Maryland Terror had won 21-13. The entire football team, their coach, and the college president had signed the ball. In an interview with Baltimore *Evening Sun* reporter Bill Tanton (November 24, 1977), Gill said: "My football days are far behind me, but getting that game ball was one of the nicest things that ever happened to me." He also remembered the Western Maryland – Hopkins game 68 years before, when WMC led at halftime, two touchdowns to one. During the second half, team captain Gill broke his collarbone but continued to play until it became too painful. "In those days, when you came out of a game, you stayed out.

constructing a pool, part of the Stoneleigh Club, which was formally opened in August 1925 and became a favorite recreation spot for the area. In 1929 he was elected president of the Baltimore Stadium Association that promoted sports activities. Gill was always a very loyal alumnus of Western Maryland College and in 1925 was elected to the board of trustees, a post he held until his death. He immediately continued his interest in athletics by encouraging Richard C. Harlow, then football coach at Colgate, to come to WMC. It is also reported that Gill brought the College's football team to Stoneleigh to train in the spring of 1925 by helping to dig the pool!

On November 11, 1927, the Western Maryland Terror played an all-Army team (composed of players from a number of regional Army bases) in a football game in Baltimore Stadium before 23,000 screaming spectators. The Armistice Day game had been created through the friendship of Gill and General MacArthur, who, of course, thought the Army team would win handily. But Army lost 48-0, and MacArthur, perhaps a bit grudgingly, presented the engraved sterling silver trophy to the Terror team captain. The MacArthur cup, the first of its kind to be won by a WMC team, is now on display in the Klitzberg Pavilion of the Gill Center.

During Coach Harlow's nine years (1926-1935) at the College, his teams often went undefeated, playing what would now be considered Division I teams. Indeed, in 1934 the team was even invited to play in a game in Florida on January 1, 1935, against the University of Miami. The following year this event was formally called the Orange Bowl. The team did not go to Florida to play that game, not because of financial considerations (for Gill would have willingly financed the trip as he had other athletic endeavors at the College including helping to subsidize Harlow's salary), but rather so that its best player, Bill Shepherd, could play in the East-West Game in San Francisco where he played 59 of 60 minutes and achieved MVP status even though his team lost! (Another player on that team was Gerald



Gill Gymnasium, Western Maryland College, built in 1939. It was named for the College benefactor, Robert J. Gill.

R. Ford). Soon thereafter Harlow announced his resignation to become the head coach at Harvard. Gill said of Harlow: "Dick Harlow, like MacArthur, was a great leader. But Harlow was great in one thing – football. . . . But MacArthur? Well, he was the best all-round man I ever *heard of*."

Robert Gill also spearheaded the fund-raising campaign to build a new athletic facility at WMC, which opened in 1939 and was named for him. He had contributed generously to the project, following in the footsteps of his aunt Annie Yingling who had funded the building of the first College gymnasium the year he was born. Yingling Gymnasium was touted as the largest in the state in 1889, and Gill Gymnasium was also once considered the largest in Maryland and served as the site of many state basketball tournaments for a number of years.²

In 1942 Gill returned to active army duty. His first assignment was directing the Army Specialized Training Programs (one of which was based at Western Maryland College from July 1943 to March 1944) for the Third Service Command in Baltimore before he was assigned to Europe in 1944. Upon the German surrender in 1945, he was named chief of the Prisoner-of-War Division, in charge of the 38 POW camps in France and Germany that held 2,852,000 prisoners. Just before he was to be mustered out following the war, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, the chief prosecutor for the United States at the Nuremberg trials, tapped Gill to become his executive officer. Gill supervised and



Seen through the Ward Memorial Arch is the Yingling Gymnasium, 1889, a gift to Western Maryland College from Annie Yingling (Class of 1871). Beyond the gymnasium stands the Old Main complex of original college buildings.

member of the legal firm, Barroll and Gill (later, Gill, Walter, Murray, and Greene) until 1917.

Robert Gill had the unusual distinction of actively participating in two world wars. His military career began soon after he returned to Baltimore following law school, when he joined the Maryland National Guard as a private. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, he went overseas as a captain, commanding the 117th Trench Mortar Battery, a unit attached to the famous 42nd Rainbow Division.¹ The division fought in crucial battles including Chateau Thierry and Verdun, and suffered over 12,000 casualties.

On July 14, 1918, Gill's men withstood a heavy artillery barrage and then turned back a German tank and infantry attack at Chalons. For these actions Captain Gill received the Distinguished Service Cross and was twice awarded a Croix de Guerre with palms Legion d'Honneur from the French government. By war's end, the young officer had attracted the attention of the division commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and Gill was made assistant chief of staff. He was promoted to major in September 1918 and became a Lieutenant Colonel in

March 1919. Many years later, he noted: "I've been accused of being General MacArthur's pet, and I confess it was true. He gave me every promotion it was legal to give." Gill left the service following the war and returned to Baltimore and his private practice of corporate law.

During the next 23 years, Gill was active in Baltimore legal affairs in his firm, Gill, Greene, and Waters, and in real estate ventures. In 1923 he was a major developer of the Stoneleigh suburban housing project in northern Baltimore. Gill was particularly interested in

He held pastorates until he was formally ordained into the Methodist Protestant ministry in 1885, the same year he married Emma. He then served pastorates in Baltimore, Chestertown, and Washington, D.C., and served from 1910 until 1915 on the church's Board of Home Missions in Seattle, Wa. In 1910, Western Maryland College conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on him, at the same commencement when his son received his A.B. degree. Dr. Gill served on the Board of Governors of the Westminster Theological Seminary (established in 1882) for 37 years, serving 27 years as the board's president. He was considered a great preacher, a man of strong convictions, and one who gave 54 years of faithful service to the Methodist Protestant Church and its conference. John and Emma had two sons, John M., Jr. who died at 11 months in 1887, and Robert Joshua, born in 1889.

The Post-Westminster Days

After his days at Western Maryland, Robert Gill continued his education at the University of Virginia Law School, and while there he was elected to three honor societies, Phi Kappa Psi, Phi Delta Phi, and Phi Beta Kappa. He completed his legal studies in 1913, was admitted to the bar in 1914 in Baltimore, and became a



Robert J. Gill in his World War I uniform.