



THE COAT OF ARMS OF
KIRKLAND HOUSE
IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

John Thornton Kirkland, President of Harvard from 1810–1828, used no coat of arms himself, nor can it be determined from which, if any, of several armigerous families of that name he descended. When, therefore, on the opening of Kirkland House in 1931, Pierre de Chaignon la Rose (A.B. Harvard 1895) was asked to design for it a coat of arms, he created a new composition, derived from sources connected with the name Kirkland but not infringing on any of the coats which suggested it. The name Kirkland originated in the Diocese of Carlisle and suggests that its first bearers were tenants of ecclesiastical lands. The arms of that diocese are a black cross on a silver field, the cross having on it a gold mitre. Moreover, the various arms of the several armigerous Kirkland families, while differing in detail, show as a common feature three silver stars called mullets or molets. Thus in Mr. la Rose's design, the field of Harvard gules (red) appropriately refers to the University. The black (sable) cross edged with silver (argent) comes from the arms of Carlisle. The three silver stars or mullets placed (charged) on the cross instead of the original mitre are found in the various Kirkland coats. ¶ The coat of arms of Kirkland House is described in heraldic terminology as: gules, on a cross sable edged with silver three mullets argent. There is neither crest nor motto.

In the spring of 1955, the Meriden Gravure Company made, by off-set and silk screen process, 500 reproductions of Mr. la Rose's original design for the arms of Kirkland House.