

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM BENNETT BIZZELL

1876-1944

William Bennett Bizzell, son of George McDuffie Bizzell and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth (Wade), was born October 14, 1876, near Independence, Texas, and died May 13, 1944, in Norman, Oklahoma.

As an only child, he was tutored through the elementary grades; at this time he learned to appreciate great books, one of his lifelong interests. During the years he acquired a library of more than 14,000 books, not including his private collection of Bibles, one of the finest in the Nation.

On August 16, 1900, he married Carrie Wray Sangster. To this union two children were born: Mrs. Lee Thompson (Elaine), now of Oklahoma City and Major William Sangster Bizzell, now serving with the United States Army somewhere in the South Pacific. Besides Mrs. Bizzell and the two children, he is survived by his mother, Mrs. Sarah Bizzell, and five grandchildren.

Doctor Bizzell received the following degrees: Bachelor of Science, Baylor University, 1898; Bachelor of Philosophy, Baylor University, 1900; Master of Laws, Illinois College of Law, Chicago, 1911; Doctor of Civil Law, Illinois College of Law, 1912; Master of Arts, University of Chicago, 1913; Doctor of Laws, Baylor University, 1919; and Doctor of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1921.

After serving for a short time as Superintendent of Schools at Montgomery, Texas, he became Superintendent of Schools at Navasota, Texas, where he served from 1900 until 1910. From 1910 until 1914 he served as President of Texas State College for Women, Denton. In 1914 he was named President of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, College Station, where he served until 1925. On July 1, 1925, he became President of the University of Oklahoma, and held that position until 1941 when he became President Emeritus and Chairman of the Department of Sociology. His record of serving for thirty-one years as a college president is one of the longest in the nation.

Doctor Bizzell was the recipient of many honors. In 1940 he was one of the three graduates to receive the Columbia Service Medal (which ranks above the honorary doctorate) from Columbia University. He served a year as President of the National Association of State Universities, and was a member of the Board of Visitors of the United States Naval Academy.

He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the Royal Economic Society of England, the American Sociological Society, the American Political Science Association, Phi Delta Kappa, Sigma Tau Delta, Phi Beta Kappa, Acacia, and other groups and societies. On November 16, 1936, he was elected to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

Although loaded down with administrative duties, he found time to write a number of books including *Austinean Theory of Sovereignty*, *Judicial Interpretation of Political Theory*, *The Social Teachings of the Jewish Prophets*, *The Green Rising*, and *The Relations of Learning*.

Vitally interested in the progress of science, he was active in the creation of the University of Oklahoma Research Institute, and was one of the eight



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original Directors when the Institute was incorporated in Oklahoma City, March 22, 1941.

Attending the first meeting of the Oklahoma Academy of Science after becoming President, Doctor Bizzell spoke to the group at Stillwater on November 26, 1926, on the subject, "The Academy and the State's Institutions for Advanced Study." Greatly interested in the program of the Academy, he was elected a fellow and retained his membership until his death. Because of his interest, annual proceedings of the Academy were published for several years at University expense.

A glimpse of his beliefs regarding objectives of science is seen in this excerpt from his inaugural address of February 5, 1926: "Our educational institutions are confronted with the necessity of making a searching analysis of their actual accomplishments in the field of pure and applied science. There is no business today that is independent of science. There is no industry that is not imperiled or advanced by scientific discovery. The chemist, the physicist and the biologist are daily extending the boundaries of knowledge to new limits and the engineer and the scientific technologists are applying this knowledge in a thousand ways to industrial and commercial enterprises."

As many persons have said, "The University is his memorial." Among the many milestones of progress during his administration are the following: (1) Offerings of the Graduate College were expanded and the first doctorates granted; (2) the University of Oklahoma Press, now internationally known, was established; (3) many new buildings, including the library, were constructed; (4) the Frank Phillips Historical Collection was established; (5) the Schools of Medicine and Nursing were established in Oklahoma City; and (6) the off-campus activities of the University were enlarged.

His years in the presidency were a time of growth without equal in the history of the University. During his sixteen years as the chief executive of the institution, enrollment grew from 4114 in the regular session of the school year 1924-25 to a grand total of more than 9000 students during the year 1940-41.

With little opportunity of coming in contact with the student body, Doctor Bizzell inaugurated the President's Honor Class, whose membership of junior men was chosen annually by a faculty committee. Many former members of this group, which met in the President's home for informal discussions, are among the most brilliant men the State has produced.

During his presidency he gave the highest allegiance to the Church. For nine years McFarlin Memorial Church presented Doctor Bizzell as its principal speaker on the second Sunday of the fall semester, known as President's Day. In January 1943 the interfraternity council of the University presented McFarlin Church an American flag with a dedication to Doctor Bizzell.

He traveled extensively both in the United States and abroad when occasion permitted. He cherished the American dream of a land where life would be richer and fuller and better, with opportunity for every person according to his ability and achievement.

His genius was shown in the years of his presidency when the University faced the depression. At a time when others might have been inclined to slacken their efforts, he redoubled his. He spent long hours, days, and weeks studying the maze of problems. Under difficult conditions he held the faculty and student body together.

Along with his boundless energy and optimism which compelled progress were a great interest in people and a capacity for friendship. Thousands of Oklahoma graduates became his good friends. He remembered them

their interests, their ambitions. He followed their careers after graduation, and his office and counsel were always open to them.

William Bennett Bizzell was superbly equipped in mind and character to be a counselor. Few, if any, men of our generation were consulted more widely on questions of educational policy. He was the adviser of university executives everywhere, a formulator of faculty programs, and a maker of college presidents. In his annual reports as the head of a great university he laid down principles which became embodied in the creeds of America's campuses. To his knowledge was added wisdom; and to his wisdom, understanding.

Oklahoma and the Nation mourn the death of this great man. Doctor Bizzell had qualities of heart and mind and soul which not only endeared him to those who came under the spell of his dynamic presence in personal associations but also made him the idol of the multitude. Frank, friendly, and warm-hearted, he had the courage of his convictions even when fighting, at times against political interference, for the future of the University. His courage and faith sustained him to the end and they remain a source of inspiration to those who will attempt to carry on his great work.—G. L. CROSS, University of Oklahoma, Norman.