

# Paxton-Berrigan Service

By Sigfrid Floren

A quiet and beautiful service in memory of two veteran faculty members whose lives came to a close last summer was conducted in Holmberg Hall on the University campus Sunday, November 5. The late Professors Joseph Francis Paxton and Edmund Berrigan were honored by brief addresses of their friends and colleagues.

The memorial convocation was planned by a committee headed by Dr. A. Richards, Dr. A. B. Adams, Lewis S. Salter, and Dr. O. W. Reinmuth worked with Dr. Richards in making preparations.

President W. B. Bizzell presided. Special music was furnished during the service by Mr. Salter, Miss Wilda Griffin, Paul S. Carpenter, Spencer H. Norton, and Miss Mildred Andrews, all of whom are on the faculty of the College of Fine Arts.

Speakers, in addition to President Bizzell, were those fellow educators who were most intimately acquainted with the men during their long periods of service at the University. President Bizzell's opening talk was entitled "Curricula Vitarum." The principal address, "Our Colleagues, In the Development and Growth of the University," was presented by T. H. Brewer, professor of English. The speaking program was completed with the talks of Dr. Adams, Dr. Reinmuth, Dr. S. W. Reaves, and Dr. L. A. Turley.

The death of Mr. Paxton occurred last June 12. He had retired in 1935 as head of the department of Greek after having been affiliated with the University since 1896. The sixty-year teaching career of Mr. Berrigan ended with his passing July 17. He had been associated with the University since 1913, and had served as head of the department of accounting since 1924. Five years ago, upon reaching the age of seventy, he was retired to half-time duties.

Relating varied stories about the lives of the two men, Mr. Brewer traced the contributions and influences of each on University life. He referred to their similarity of character. "Both were shy and retiring in disposition, both were very versatile, and both were great readers and students, and were possessed of great memories," he said. In a separate discussion of each man, he told of Mr. Paxton's struggle as a youth, of his beginning to teach at the age of sixteen, and of his steady rise in the field of education.

Mr. Paxton's personality drew praise from all the speakers. He was described by Mr. Brewer as a true humanist, in the old Greek sense. "He looked upon this world as made up of men and women who were the most important things in it. He was not much of a mystic or a religious fana-

tic, nor did he run off after isms of any kind. He was sane and sensible and his sense of proportion was correct. He had an eye for the beauties of nature, but after all it was human nature that most interested him."

Mr. Berrigan was characterized by this speaker as kind, genial, and cultured, like Mr. Paxton, "with perhaps a little more of the rugged, the radical, and the unconventional in his make-up." He wrote a good burlesque verse, was an accomplished musician, and before he turned most of his outside attention to golf, he spent considerable time in gardening and in miscellaneous carpentering about his home.

In connection with his musical ability, which was known only to a few, the story is told of a lady visiting at his home surprising him at the piano with a selection from Schubert; she, in turn, Mr. Brewer related, was surprised at his knowledge and skill.

Dr. Adams, dean of the college in which Professor Berrigan served, spoke on "Our Colleagues, In Professional Activities," and read a resolution that was passed by the faculty of the College of Business Administration following the professor's death.

The resolution stated in part:

"All the faculty colleagues of Professor Berrigan accord him profound tribute for his long services as well as high respect for his independence, his positive determination, his strong sense of reality, and, above all, his keen sense of humor. All his colleagues felt a common loss and a deep regret on the receipt of word of his sudden passing. Death, as it must to all men, had come to Professor Berrigan.

"The faculty of the College of Business Administration of the University of Oklahoma in meeting assembled this day, pauses to pay tribute to the memory of our Professor Berrigan. He was a man, he was respected by all, and he was loved by those who knew him best."

The professional activities of Professor Paxton were recalled in the talk of Dr. Reinmuth, who succeeded him as head of the department of classical languages.

"Our Colleagues, On the Campus and In the Town" was the subject of the address given by Dr. Reaves, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, on Mr. Paxton's life, and by Dr. Turley of the University School of Medicine about Mr. Berrigan.

"He never tried to mentally dominate a situation unless it was his business to do so," Dr. Turley said of Mr. Berrigan. "He would rarely explain or defend his statements if they were challenged. Yet one of his favorite forms of discourse was argu-

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ment. He would often take the side opposed to his real opinion, and pursue the discussion as long as one cared to do so. I never, however, have heard him attack or belittle any man however vehemently and earnestly he might condemn or oppose a man's actions or opinions.

"In the last few years with the ripeness and glory of age upon him and the knowledge of the task well done he would often sit in a rocking chair in the yard with his knees crossed, his suspended toe making a circle with each swing of the chair. He was the living image of those words of Browning, 'Still within this life though lifted o'er its strife'."

In his words on the life of Mr. Paxton, Dr. Reaves mentioned his former colleague's fondness of making puns. He recalled the introduction that Professor Paxton made of President Boyd to the student body a number of years ago. In that introduction he remarked that President Boyd had been principally interested in the cultivation of green trees and green freshmen.

Describing the personal traits of the veteran educator, Dr. Reaves said, "I think all will admit that there was about Mr. Paxton a cultural atmosphere not easy to define but quickly recognized. I think he had never taken a course, the purpose of which was to give training for making a living, and I am sure he never taught a course which had such a purpose as its main objective. His studies and his teaching had for objectives better living rather than training for better salaries."

Special memorial funds have been established in tribute to the two men. Friends of Mr. Berrigan set up a fund for the purchase of books and a commemorative plaque for the College of Business Administration Library.

Since it was Mr. Paxton's wish that his friends refrain from sending floral offerings at his death, but that they express their regard for him by helping those to whom he had dedicated the greater part of his life, a memorial loan fund was established to assist worthy students in classical languages and literatures.

A large number of close friends of the two professors and individuals who had been students in their classes attended the impressive services.

The Corps of Honor included Jerome Dowd, Julien C. Monnet, David W. Griffin, Aute Richards, James W. Sturgis, Andrew R. Ramey, Patricio Gimeno, Lewis S. Salter, Edwin DeBarr, Joseph Blatt, William K. Newton, and Arthur B. Adams.

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