

IN MEMORIAM—RONALD E. SLEETH

The Iliff school community was deeply saddened by the death of Ronald E. Sleeth, Professor of Preaching, on April 11, 1985. Although he experienced times of illness in recent months, the seriousness of his condition was not discovered until mid-March after which the cancer progressed with extraordinary rapidity. A memorial service was held at Wellshire Presbyterian Church on April 13, at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, and at Iliff for the school community on April 18.

Dr. Sleeth joined the Iliff faculty in 1981 and had been a vigorous contributor to the life of the school in his inimitable style, far greater than might be expected in this span of time. The circle of friends which he and his wife, Natalie, enjoyed so richly was extensive in Colorado and reached into many other areas.

Nationally renowned as preacher and scholar, his books included: *Persuasive Preaching* (1956, reissued 1965 and 1981), *Proclaiming the Word* (1964, 1973), *Which Way To God?* (1968), *Splinters in the Quick* (1971), *Proclamation: Pentecost 1* (with John R. Donahue, S.J., 1974) and *Look Who's Talking* (1977). He had completed a book manuscript this winter which is due for publication later in the year: *God's Word and our Words*.

His extraordinary career began as Chaplain in the Navy in World War II, followed by faculty positions at West Virginia Wesleyan College (where he later served as President), Garrett Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt University, Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, and The Iliff School of Theology. In 1972 he served as President of the Academy of Homiletics. Recipient of many honors and lectureships, author of numerous articles, active in professional societies, nevertheless his principal professional focus was in the classroom where his concern was always for the students as persons and as growing religious professionals in their own right.

Life for him was an ongoing pilgrimage to be met as a challenge and with high expectancy, to be shared generously, enthusiastically, and with direct honesty. There was always something of the child in him, a quality that manifests the observation of Mencius: "The great person always carries something of the child in the breast." He will be missed. It is also true, to borrow the words of Pericles as he spoke of the heroes of Athens, that

...their Story is not graven only on Stone over their native Earth,
but lives on far away, without visible Symbol, woven into the Stuff
of others' lives.

—The Editor



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