

# In Memoriam

## LOWELL BENJAMIN SWAN

This issue of *The Iliff Review* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Lowell B. Swan, President of The Iliff School of Theology — with sorrow, affection and appreciation.

On January 18, 1969 in Los Angeles a plane bound for Denver and Milwaukee went down in the ocean shortly after take-off. All who were aboard, including Dr. Swan, perished. He was returning from a west coast meeting concerned with the future of theological education, a cause to which he had given continuous and devoted attention.

The school, students and staff no less than faculty and administration, experienced deep shock and grief, and sorrow will remain long after the initial shock has passed. The family members — a family of close ties and warm affection — received the condolences of the larger community in an extraordinary outpouring that came from every class and segment of the metropolitan populace, and, indeed from far across the nation.

"Truly this is a grief and we must bear it." So said Jeremiah. So hath it fallen here.

In a subsequent issue of this journal we shall be publishing additional articles in recognition of our loss and our gratitude for his service and friendship. Meanwhile, a recounting of his curriculum vitae will recall to mind for many the deeply personal and pastoral relationships that clothe the structure of facts with humanness.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, July 7, 1910, Lowell Benjamin Swan was the youngest of seven children born to Eric Phillip and Marie Larson Swan. After completing high school he attended DePauw University and Drake University, receiving his B.A. in 1934 from the latter. He continued his education at the University of Nebraska from 1934 to 1936, then at The Iliff School of Theology, receiving the Th.M. degree in 1940. Subsequently he was able to continue advanced studies, majoring in regional church history — a subject in which he retained life-long interest and to which he made significant contributions —, receiving from Iliff his Th. D. degree in 1951.

On June 1, 1936 he was married to Katherine M. Short. Their children are Mary Katherine (Mrs. Clifford Hodge), Martha Ann (Mrs. Lee C. Dohm, Jr.), David Lowell, and Nancy Jane. Taken into their hearts as well as the family circle are their sons-in-law, Clifford Hodge and Lee C. Dohm, Jr., and daughter-in-law, Marilyn (Mrs. David) Swan. The first son, William Phillip, preceded his father in death.

Dr. Swan served as Pastor of the Methodist Church in Harcourt, Iowa

(1931-34), Wesley Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska (1934-36), Emmanuel Methodist Church, Denver (1936-40), as Chaplain, Swedish National Sanatorium, Denver (1940-41), Pastor, Community Church, Savanna, Illinois (1941-42), Chaplain in the United States Army (1942-45), Pastor, Arvada, Colorado Methodist Church (1945-47), and Warren Methodist Church, Denver (1947-62). He became President of The Iliff School of Theology in 1962 and continued in that office until his death.

His additional responsibilities and involvements were numerous, among them: Chairman of the Rocky Mountain Methodist Conference Commission on World Service and Finance (1949-62), Vice President of the Rocky Mountain Methodist Historical Society (1951-63), and membership in the Masonic Lodge, Knights Templar, El Jebel Shrine, and the Consistory, the Ben Franklin Club, Kiwanis (being Vice President of the Denver Kiwanis Club this year), Delta Tau Delta, and the Colorado Historical Society. He was elected a Delegate to the 1960 and 1964 General Conferences of the Methodist Church and was a Board Member of the Rocky Mountain Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He was a Past President of the Denver Ministerial Association, the Denver Legal Aid Society, and the Denver Council of Churches. He was holder of the Bronze Star Medal.

His body was recovered and a Funeral Service was held at Trinity United Methodist Church on January 23. On January 28 a Memorial Service was held at the University Park United Methodist Church in conjunction with the Iliff Week of Graduate Lectures and the Rocky Mountain Pastor's School, of which he was Dean. Additional Memorial Services were held at Saint Thomas Seminary, Warren United Methodist Church, and The Iliff School of Theology.

Students, parishoners, friends, colleagues and loved ones borrow the thought of the Apostle Paul to say that his most enduring memorial consists not in words that can be written, rather we are his letters, where he wrote on our hearts, "to be known and read by all men . . . not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." The oration of Pericles, in the version given by Thucydides, speaks for us:

*So they gave their bodies to the Commonwealth, and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die; and with it the grandest of all sepulchres, not that in which their bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as occasion comes For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; and 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 other men's lives.*

—THE EDITOR

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