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Editor Is Chief Speaker At President's Funeral

The Collegian Nov. 15, 1940

Brinkerhoff Characterizes His Friend As Man Of Enthusiasm, Courage, Untiring Energy Whose Monument Is The College

F. W. Brinkerhoff, editor of the Pittsburg Headlight and the Pittsburg Sun and a close friend of President Brandenburg for many years, delivered the address at Doctor Brandenburg's funeral Thursday afternoon, Oct. 31. In that address he characterized the late president as an able and courageous administrator, a man of high ideals, a teacher of teachers, a civic leader, a man among men. The address:

Nothing could be more appropriate or fitting than that we should take leave of our friend here at the scene of the trials that tested his resourcefulness, his industry, his courage and his sublime faith in the justice of his cause and of the triumphs that tested the character of his leadership. Here he performed the duties of the administrator, carried the heavy burden of the executive, supplied the virile inspiration for faculty and student body alike and saw the campus receive structure after structure in response to his proposals. Here and nearby he presided over the ceremonies that climaxed each of 27 years of work. Here he was happy in the achievement of great success. Here is the material monument to the life and labors of William A. Brandenburg. And the thousands of men and women who took from his hand here the awards they had won comprise a living memorial. And so it is well that we should choose these scenes so familiar to him for our final parting.

President Brandenburg assumed the responsibilities of his post in Pittsburg when the institution had few students, a small faculty and facilities that were very meagre. But he brought unbounded enthusiasm for his job and full confidence in the future of the institution. That enthusiasm he never lost. But it took more than enthusiasm to accomplish what was accomplished. It took ambition, it

took ability, it took learning, it took judgment, it took courage, it took leadership. All of these President Brandenburg possessed. There is no occasion to review the progress of the institution under his guidance. Here it stands, offering the unimpeachable evidence of competent direction, with wisdom and vision.

The devotion of President Brandenburg to this institution was supreme. Whether on the football field, in legislative committee rooms, in public forum or behind the desk over which flowed the multitudinous details of administration, his attention was centered on the welfare of the College. He permitted nothing to interfere with his official responsibilities. He challenged every attack, from whatever direction, on the College. He carried the banner of the idea represented by this institution on fields of educational conflict as gallantly as any soldier struggled on the field of battle.

On March 27, 1914, the state, through its board of administration, formally committed the care of this institution to President Brandenburg. In his inaugural address, in which he outlined his views of education comprehensively, the new president said: "There is but one thing greater in this world than being a great teacher. That one thing is being a truly worthy teacher of teachers."

To that statement President Brandenburg adhered rigidly. He appreciated that he was a teacher of teachers and that those who were to work with him were to be teachers of teach-

ers. He never lost sight of his guiding principle nor neglected his central responsibility. A teacher of teachers he remained to the end.

Recognition in his profession came to President Brandenburg in the state and in the nation. He received the highest honors of the teachers of Kan-

sas. He had served for many years on the state board of education. He was an active and important member of organizations covering more than his own state. And this year he had risen to the presidency of the national organization of teachers' colleges, a summit of recognition in his field of labor.

To all of these assignments he carried his characteristic enthusiasm, his unyielding earnestness and the wisdom gained in his long years of successful experience in the profession. President Brandenburg was a hard worker. Hours meant nothing to him. When there was work to do, he insisted on doing it. The hardships of travel to many and far places he considered a justified sacrifice in behalf of the institution and the profession he represented.

The presidency of this institution, or of any educational institution, makes tremendous demands on the executive. He deals not only with the problems of business management, but with the problems of human relationships as embodied in a large staff of assistants and in a group of young men and women known as the student body. If a president were so disposed, he would have plenty to do without ever leaving the campus or even his office. But President Brandenburg conceived it to be his duty not only to administer the affairs of this College but to represent the College on the outside.

Graduates, in a far-flung circle of professional service, inevitably called to him for visits. There were commencements and other occasions where his platform services were sought. Only the limitations of time were allowed to interfere with his re-

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sponses to these calls. Consequently, President Brandenburg became one of the best-known Kansans of this day. In hundreds of communities throughout the state, and year after year, he appeared to accommodate some graduate or some other friend of the College. This involved sacrifice of comfort, a drain on his health and often a personal expense. Uniformly, if admonished to reduce such activities, his answer was that he was doing what this College was entitled to have done for it. Those who are familiar with the history of this institution know of the unselfish service of members of the faculty, of the long hours that many of them worked in the earlier years, of the nights of traveling and teaching and of the lack of financial remuneration for them. President Brandenburg was appreciative of this demonstration of loyalty and enthusiasm and he was proud to be able to serve in this line of duty with them. The qualities of a leader are revealed most truly in the manner in which he exercises a sympathetic interest in those he leads. This institution is a monument not only to the great leader who has fallen but to those who served under his inspiring leadership. And President Brandenburg, in his unselfish devotion to the College and his appreciation of his associates were he able to speak today, would be the first to approve that statement.

When President Brandenburg arrived in Kansas to assume his post he became a citizen and he never lost his sense of appreciation of that fact. From the very beginning of his administration, he took a deep interest not only in the affairs of Kansas, but in the affairs of this community that was to be his home for the rest of his life.

At the beginning of his inaugural address, in which he addressed the members of the board of administration and the large audience assembled, the new president said:

"Deeply conscious of both the high honor and the sacred responsibility conferred upon me by virtue of your act, I herewith pledge to the citizens of Kansas, and to you their representatives my best efforts in all things, at all times."

That pledge President Brandenburg never forgot.

As a citizen he served the community in numerous places. He was a worker in the Chamber of Commerce and was its president in his turn. He served on committees that had menial tasks to perform. He served as chairman of committees. He was this year the head of an important body of the central civic organization. Undoubtedly, he realized, although he never revealed it, that his position as head of this institution made him of peculiar importance in any sort of civic work. By virtue of his post, he was an outstanding citizen of Pittsburg. But had he not held this post, he would have been an outstanding citizen, too. The high place he held did not make him the prominent and aggressive citizen that he was. It was the man himself who was responsible for the quality of citizenship that he was to exemplify for nearly 30 years here in Kansas.

Thus, here in Pittsburg, today there is deep sorrow as we part with this stalwart citizen. The imprint of his work for the community will not be erased. The influence of his aggressive participation will be effective for long years to come. Back of all of his achievements in civic life stands the man we knew so well. He was a stalwart figure because he had a fair mind that rejected prejudice and that was ever open to conviction. Once his convictions were formed, he had the courage of those convictions and he was fearless in expounding them. He was as admirable in victory as he was in defeat. He lost causes. All men lose causes at times. He knew how to accept adversities without surrendering. He could take blows that were baffling. But not all men who can lose admirably can win admirably. President Brandenburg was one who knew how to accept his victories graciously. There was no boasting after his triumphs.

President Brandenburg was a calm, unexcitable leader, a general who was at all times in command of himself. He had many occasions when loss of temper would have been

natural and justified. But he maintained complete control of himself by mastering his mental attitude under all sorts of conditions. His own enthusiasm for some project never was permitted to carry him beyond the limit set by his judgment. He was never stampeded into support or into opposition. President Brandenburg was himself at all times. He was never affected. He possessed executive ability of a high order. But he was diplomatic in his labors as an executive. He could make decisions promptly, but he could not be rushed. He appreciated his own responsibilities. He sought to maintain peaceful relations with all men. But he was not afraid to fight.

President Brandenburg was democratic in his relations with men. One of his attainments in his profession and prominence and heavy duties might be excused for an attitude that suggested aloofness. But President Brandenburg was approachable. From his beginning as a boy on an Iowa farm, he had experienced the difficulties that made him appreciative of the problems of the ordinary man. He knew what hardships were. His career as a teacher had led through difficulties. He reached eminence by his own endeavors and on his upward way he had received the help of common men and women. He knew the hollowness of pomp and ceremony. He knew the vital things that count. He had a magnificent sense of humor. He could turn from serious thoughts to the opposite kind with rapidity and this facility gave him greater effectiveness on the platform. President Brandenburg was gifted with the art of oratory. Few Kansans were called upon for more appearances on the platform. His addresses were by no means confined to educational matters. He was equally at home before a great popular audience or a smaller group at a civic banquet or before a conference of teachers. His capacity for adjusting himself to situations was one of the secrets of his power as an orator. On the platform President Brandenburg was as courageous

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as he was in any other undertaking. Many are the men and women here today who have seen him rise to heights in expression. He was a patriot, an American who could tolerate no enemies of his country and who never was afraid to denounce them. His eloquence was employed continuously in pleading for greater acceptance of American principles.

President Brandenburg had the splendid inspiration of his home and his family. To that home he took his troubles as well as his triumphs as he built his life into a career. And there, he found the encouragement and helpfulness that sent him out to win. From the good woman who stood by his side through all the struggles and from the laughter of children in that home he went forth equipped to meet any problem. And as the years passed, the pride he had in the young men and women whose laughter had cheered him onward was a source of renewed strength.

Basic as to his inspirations and the foundation for his achievements was the unshakeable faith he held in his religion. He was at home in the pulpit or the pew.

My first view of President Brandenburg was in the summer of 1913 when he first came to Pittsburg, the president-elect of this institution. He was filled with enthusiasm. He believed there was a magnificent future for the school. He planned to build and build and build.

And he did. My last chance to see him was across the way a few weeks ago. The freshmen were being initiated. President Brandenburg, plainly stricken with illness, stood there in the coolness of a September night and held the flaming torch from which each freshman lighted a torch. For nearly 30 years he had been lighting the torches of learning and of opportunity through learning for his freshmen. If there had to be a final view of this great man, a view that symbolized his career, this was perfect.

To William A. Brandenburg, Christian gentleman, husband, father, citizen, executive, administrator and man among men, farewell.