Dr. Todd had a very wonderful helpmate in Charles Robbins. Mr. Robbins was a member of Epworth Methodist Church, an outstanding layman in this area and lay leader in the Methodist Church for a number of years. He was also a very excellent businessman and he had a wonderful relationship with the business community. He belonged to the Kiwanis Club, while Dr. Todd was one of the leaders in the Rotary Club.

As I became acquainted around town, I was jokingly told by the alumni and other people that Dr. Todd raised the money and Charles Robbins kept it, and in that way the College was in a stable financial condition.

Mr. Robbins was a very astute businessman and very careful as to the expenditures of money. He was very careful concerning allocations for supplies and he checked up to see that supplies were very carefully used. When, for instance, in the early days, an honorary degree was to be conferred, he would say at a Trustee meeting, "It is the tradition for the Board of Trustees to contribute the money to pay for the honorary degree hood. Would you people like to do this?" Many a man received a hood because the Trustees contributed the $16 to cover the cost.

It is almost impossible in this day to picture the kind of financial situation which existed in those days. Students were paying something between $50 and $75 a semester for tuition, and they were having a hard time paying that! It was a commuting college, or as it was referred to often in those days, a "streetcar
college". You could get to the campus for a nickel and you could borrow money for your tuition, either from the school or from the banks or from your parents, and probably 70 per cent of the students had financial difficulty in getting through. Oftentimes they worked their way through, by janitor work, library work, or other kinds of jobs.

At the time of the change of administration, the highest faculty salary was $3000 and the president's salary was $5000. When I looked at the budget, I knew that we had to raise the salaries at the earliest possible moment. While we had a retirement contract with Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (TIAA), the individual faculty member paid 3 per cent and the University paid 3 per cent toward the retirement premium. It was a great privilege for me to increase this to 6 per cent from the University before too long. Then one night, as I was working over the budget at midnight, I discovered that the University could pick up the full 12 per cent. It would be like giving each faculty member a tax-free increase at the top of his tax bracket, so it was not too long before the University picked up the entire tab for the retirement system.

I remember Mr. Robbins very well. I had not been at the College very long when he came in one day and said, "Mr. President, I need to talk to you." I wondered what the situation was, and he said, "I think I should tell you that your name is being seriously considered for a possible election to the episcopacy of the Methodist Church and I want to know what your feelings might be about it." He was a leader of the lay delegation for the Pacific Northwest Conference and he had conferred with the Oregon Conference and they knew me because of my time at Willamette. He had also conferred with one or two of the leading people
in the California Conference and with Mr. George Atkinson, owner of the George F. Atkinson Construction Company. "I think there is every reason to believe you would be elected if you would allow your name to be submitted," he said. Naturally, I was very much surprised and it was an altogether different situation in which I had expected to find myself.

Lucille and I talked it over at long length. There was no assurance that the election would take place but there was a very real possibility that it might materialize. We discussed the alternatives, the difference in living on the campus at the College of Puget Sound, of possibly raising a family here, and being in the episcopacy of the Church and moving around a great deal and traveling a great deal. While the presidency of the College would mean considerable travel, at the same time, it would allow us more of a family life than the episcopacy would at that time.

A few days later, I talked to Mr. Robbins and thanked him very much for the suggestion but I told him that I thought there was much yet to be done at the College of Puget Sound and would he tell his colleagues that, while I appreciated the thought, my heart was on the campus of the College of Puget Sound.

Naturally, through the years, I have given great thought and wonderment to what might have happened if there had been a different turn in the road at that time. We have never regretted our decision and I have had many wonderful friends in the episcopacy and still do. It is a great organization and known for its efficiency and for the achievements it has made—locally, nationally and internationally.
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Robbins were two of the most outstanding people in the history of the University of Puget Sound. He was a graduate of DePauw University in 1904 and a student at the University of Washington in 1922. He was in business in Chili, Peru, and Bolivia from 1906 to 1911. While he was there he was very much interested in the Methodist Church and its development and in the missionary program which was starting at that time. He was in the diplomatic service for the United States in Coperhaugen in 1918 and 1919. He came as a professor of Spanish to the College of Puget Sound in 1916 but his main responsibility was officer of finance for the College. His wife was also a part of the faculty in the Spanish Department from 1929 on.

It is hard to evaluate the Robbins influence at the University of Puget Sound. He was actually a right-hand man to the President. They made an excellent team. There is a facetious saying going around that Dr. Todd raised the money and Mr. Robbins kept it and for that reason the University was able to maintain its financial structure and development. He was known as a very outstanding business man - sometimes hard-nosed in his decisions - and often times the faculty criticised him for the fact that he would not allocate monies which they wished to spend.

Actually, Charles Robbins was at times coach and Director of Athletics. For a few months in the early days he was acting Dean of the School. At the time when Dr. Todd was in constant financial campaigns, Mr. Robbins made many of the decisions concerning the progress and development of the college.
He was a tall, good-looking man and would command attention in any room where he entered. He was a kindly man although he was a man who had strong ideas and strong opinions. I found it was no problem to work with him when I came to the University in 1942.

After I had been here some months I became aware of the fact that I did not know the financial side of the University as I wished so I sent a memorandum to Mr. Robbins saying that I would like to read the checks before they were sent out. He came in and was angry and said there was no need for the President to waste his time in the reading of checks because they were all audited and taken care of in the best business manner. I assured him I had no doubts in my mind but that they were perfectly fine in every way and I said that if I was going to have to raise the money for the College of Puget Sound, I wanted to know where it was to be spent. He stood up by the desk and said, "Mr. President, there is absolutely no need for this. It is a waste of your time and totally unnecessary." I remember I stood up and said, "Mr. Robbins, I have great regard and affection for you but I want to read the checks. Time is on my side and I request that they come through my office before they are sent out." He left the office in a tense mood and I thought maybe I had been unwise in my decision. However, he came back in a few minutes with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face and said, "Mr. President, you are right. We will be happy to cooperate to the fullest." From that time on, I read the checks until the time I retired 31 years later. It was a
very good procedure because you knew exactly where the money was going. You knew what programs were being funded and what programs were not being funded. It only took probably 10 minutes a day to keep abreast of the financial side of the University.

Mr. Robbins was a very outstanding leader in the Methodist Church. He was "Lay Leader" of the Conference for many years. He was looked upon, not only locally but nationally as a very outstanding leader in the church and its program.

The Robbins had two daughters and one son. The son was in the military and died tragically before Mr. and Mrs. Robbins left us. In the Historical Resource of University, I called both of the daughters and asked if I could come to their home and make a tape recording of their memories of their parents, also their day to day life at the College of Puget Sound and anything else they might like to record. I was very disappointed when both of them said they didn't think there was anything they had to say and it had been so long since they had been involved with their father and mother at the College that they declined to be put on tape. I was sorry for this because I am sure it would have been valuable.

I had great regard and affection for both of the Robbins. They were both beloved by students. Particularly, Mrs. Robbins from her days of teaching Spanish and Mr. Robbins, too, for the days that he taught Spanish. He was highly regarded
by the townspeople who held him in great regard and affection.
He was always amenable to the latest business procedures and was
always very eager to do anything for the good of the school.

During the years prior to 1929, the college had
acquired a good many houses in the collegiate community, either
by gifts or purchase, or by putting their endowment out in
7 percent mortgages. I shall never forget when I came, one
of the questions from the Finance Committee which met each
Thursday at 11:00 (one hour prior to going to Rotary to which
most of the men were members), one of the questions was,
"Should we foreclose on these houses because the depression
had made it impossible for people to pay their mortgages?"
I shall never forget, there was always a great sense of
sympathy for people in difficulty and we did not, as I recall,
ever foreclose on any house, but helped people work out their
destiny.

One of the problems we had was that the University
had advanced money to Mr. L. L. Dawley in Olympia so that he
could build a very large apartment house close to the State
Capital. This was done and Mr. Dawley, during the depression,
was not able to pay any interest. Mr. Robbins wrote to him and,
as I remember the memorandum it said, "Mr. Dawley, we will not
foreclose on you. We will add the accrued interest to the total
amount you owe and one of these years you will be able to pay."
Of course, Mr. Dawley was eventually able to pay. I talked to him
a number of times about leaving some of his very unusual estate
to the University but he would never commit himself to do it.
I always felt it was unfair on his part because we had actually
saved him from foreclosure on some of his houses and apartment
house during the time when he was under financial duress.

I was surprised one day when Mr. Robbins came in and
said, "Dr., I would like to retire." He had served faithfully
and well for many, many years and it did not seem right for him
to retire but I was willing to acquiesce to this request. He
retired and we had an unusual retirement party honoring Dr. and
Mrs. Robbins.

They had a modest house not very far from the
University and shortly after their retirement they sold their
home and moved to Wesley Gardens. I have spoken at Wesley
Gardens each year for twenty years and always before or after
I have spent a couple of hours with him bringing him up-to-date
on what was happening at the University, the programs he started,
the people who were helping - like the Collins family - and others
in whom he had a genuine interest. He always seemed to appreciate
it and I was very happy to do it because I really looked upon
him as a senior statesman, counselor, and advisor.

I shall never forget, one day Mr. and Mrs. Robbins -
in the meantime we had given him an honorary degree as he was
Dr. Robbins - came to my office and we sat and talked for two
solid hours. He talked about his hopes, his aspirations, his
dreams for the University, and how pleased he was on the progress
that was being made - how we were trying to carry out the program
as outlined by Dr. Todd and Mr. Robbins. There was a warm sense
of genuine appreciation for the fact that he had literally given his life to the school. I was so happy to be able to reassure him that he was greatly appreciated, both by the present administration and also by many, many townspeople, church people, alumni, and friends.

I did not know that would be the last time I would talk with him. Shortly after that he went to Wesley Gardens and then he slipped away from us. Mrs. Robbins lived for a few years longer and then she too left us. Their contribution to the College of Puget Sound and the University of Puget Sound cannot in any way be estimated because it was a dedication of great lives for a great cause and there has been great appreciation for them throughout all the years.