On the 16th of February 1942, the Board of Trustees received a letter from Mr. Charles Robbins stating that he felt the time had come for him to retire. His letter was very commendatory but he said that it felt it was wise that he ask the Board to allow his retirement to come at the end of the fiscal year which was August 31st, 1944. Trustee Henry Cramer made a motion that the Chairman of the Board of Trustees set up a committee to confirm Mr. Robbins concerning his retirement, a kind of recognition and a kind of retirement which he desired. This was done and Mr. Blaine, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees set up a committee consisting of Mr. Dix Rowland, Chairman, Mr. William W. Kilworth, and Mr. Franklin Johnson, and Dr. Thompson. At the Board meeting on the 27th of May, 1944. Mr. Rowland reported that the Committee had met with Mr. Robbins, talked with him and strongly suggested that he stay on for another year. He was somewhat reluctant to do so but decided that would at least stay on part time and allow the administration to seek his successor.

The relationship through the years had been most friendly and, of course, had been of great consequence and meaning to the College of Puget Sound. There was hardly any position in the administration, with the exception of president, that Mr. Robbins had not filled at one time or another. One of the pictures of the football team, in approximately 1916 shows him at the very center of the picture and he was either coach or assistant coach. On many a game I remember that he was the
official time keeper standing on the sidelines with his watch on one hand and a gun in the other.

He and Dr. Todd made a perfect team for administration for a school that was going thru the financial difficulties and the growing pains such as the College of Puget Sound had from 1913 on when Dr. Todd came. There was a saying among the alumnae that Dr. Todd raised money and Mr. Robbins kept it. For that reason there was financial responsibility in the life of the college. Dr. Todd spoke always with highest regard and appreciation for Mr. Robbins and likewise Mr. Robbins spoke highly concerning the leadership given by Dr. Todd. I am sure they had very grave times when the cash flow was low and also when there was difficulty in the various campaigns for which they had responsibility. Dr. Todd was in a continuous campaign for 18 years. One campaign after another - one to meet the James Hill challenge - he would give a quarter of a million dollars if the college would raise three-quarters of a million dollars. There were other campaigns, one after another, and Mr. Robbins was a very much a part of them as was Dr. Todd. At one time they had a meeting at the Tacoma Hotel - which later burned - at that meeting they had over 400 people who assembled to create the atmosphere of challenge to meet the Hill campaign. The Governor spoke, the Bishop spoke, the president of the University of Washington spoke, the president of Western Washington College spoke, Dr. Todd spoke and many of the Methodist leaders spoke outlining the campaign which would take place and which ultimately was successful.

Once in going over the endowment fund, I computed its
income and discovered that its income was low in comparison to the total amount of the endowment fund. I talked to Mr. Banks, who was our bursar and asked him why the percentage of income was low. He looked at me with a little wonderment in his eyes and said, "Well, Dr., it is because we are carrying so many pledges as assets." Upon inquiry, I found that there was $382,000 which had been used as pledges and as assets in order to meet one of the challenges. This was non productive and, of course, the dollars were not there. In conjunction with Mr. Banks and also the Treasurer of the corporation, I strongly suggested that money that I raised that were not earmarked for any special purposes should go to build up this $382,000 to give us actual solid money for the endowment fund. This was done. Part of this pledge was taken in 1927-28 prior to the big market crash and depression of 1929. In going over some of the pledges I discovered that they had been given by men who had been sincere and honest and who expected to pay them. I recall in my collection of money on two different occasions I asked people to help us and they were very cool. Upon finally discovering that in both instances they had pledged $1500 and when the crash came they did not have the money to pay it. Our field man at that time was not very judicious and he threatened to take them to court and collect on the pledges. They borrowed the money to pay the pledges, however, in both cases we ultimately lost a great deal. One of the men, a Mr. Stuart of Seattle told me that he would not give any money to the University of Puget Sound because he had been treated badly by the University. Ultimately he gave $100,000 to Whitworth. However, it was after
he had changed from First Methodist Church in Seattle to First Presbyterian Church in Seattle and felt that his loyalties had changed from one denomination to another. The other man was Mr. G. R. Kirk of the Kirk Christmas Tree Company. He told me he borrowed the $1500 and paid interest on it in order to fulfill his pledge. He said he did not want to help the college from then on. However, he did leave $1,000 in his estate when his will was probated. This was when I talked to him at great length and told him how sorry I was about his earlier treatment.

The reason for including this in the Historical Resources is that I discovered that some of the pledges that were there were both from Dr. Todd and Mr. Charles Robbins. I did not see how they could possibly make a pledge to a development program because I knew that Dr. Todd's salary was approximately $3,000 a year and for a good many years Mr. Robbins salary was $900 or $75.00 a month. However, those pledges were there in the file and each pledge had a statement: "This pledge supercedes all other pledges and cancels any other pledges made by me to the College of Puget Sound." This way both of them could pledge at the very beginning of the campaign and help the campaign be that much more successful and at the same time, that pledge would be cancelled when they made a new pledge for a new campaign. It was a rather unusual way of helping the campaign and at the same time, not bringing hardships on to their families because neither one could afford to actually give money to the College of Puget Sound at that time. This is somewhat typical of what has happened through the years. I remember when I was vice-president of Willamette, I one time said to President Baxter, "Why can't we ask the Methodist Ministers at their
churches for more financial support?" I shall never forget he said to me, "Well Frank, just take an honest to God look at the situation. Take the man who is right outside of East Salem. He gets $900 a year and he will have to raise three children and see them through school. They probably do not have enough to eat and clothe themselves let alone share anything with a campaign for a college or university." This made me very sensitive through the years to the situation in which we found ourselves educating many of the children on the parsonages. Ninety percent of them were wonderful youngsters and ten percent were very difficult people to have on the campus.

The resignation of Mr. Robbins became of serious concern to me because I had leaned very heavily on him. I think our philosophies had been congenial. I do not remember that we had any special differences of opinion. He was a very outstanding leader in the Methodist Church. He was the lay leader of the Pacific Northwest Conference at that time which included all the State of Washington and the panhandle of Idaho. I recall he came to my office one time and said, "Now, Mr. President I want to talk to you as a friend and as an outstanding Methodist leader. You are well known in California for the lectures you have given there. You are also well known in Oregon because you were one of the outstanding preachers when you were a minister preaching in Corvallis when Colonel Stevens was called into the service from the Reserve. I have every reason to believe that you could be elected Bishop of the
Methodist Church if you would allow us to put your name before the groups." The Bishops of the Methodist Church do not candidate nor do they do other than appear before the Jurisdictional Conference, and there the various delegates vote on them. He said, "I am here to simply say that if you will allow us to put your name up, I am sure you will be elected as a Bishop of the Western Jurisdictional Conference."

It was a very subtle compliment to Lucille and myself. I said to him, "Let me think it over and I went home and talked with Lucille about it at some length. We had been planning to start our family and we also knew that the Bishops moved from place to place, that there was a great deal of honor to the position and yet, at the same time, a great deal of heart ache and travel. We knew what we had at the College of Puget Sound and we did not know what the future would hold in the episcopacy. Because of the fact that Dr. Baxter, President of Willamette said, "If you will give yourself to one position, work your life there, you will make an outstanding contribution to the Church and to your own life. After careful, prayerful thought, Lucille and I decided we did not want to be candidates for the Bishopric, although Mr. Robbins came again and in a very friendly way said, "A Chairman of the delegation I could assure you you would be elected if you would chose.

Mr. Robbins was a very outstanding financial manager. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees met each Thursday from 11:00 to 12:00 in the office of Mr. Dix Rowland,
who was treasurer of the Corporation. The reason for the meeting from 11:00 to 12:00 was because the business could be transacted and then the members of the Finance Committee, most of whom belonged to Rotary, could go to the Winthrop Hotel for the Rotary meeting. Dr. Todd used to do this and Mr. E. G. Karlen, Mr. W. W. Kilworth, and Mr. Roe Shaub were on the committee as well as myself and Mr. Robbins. This Committee evolved and part of the time Mr. Philip Weyerhaueser II was on it as was Mr. Herman Tenzler. From time to time Mr. Norton Clapp visited and gave his judgement concerning the management of the endowment fund for the college.

Mr. Robbins staff was most loyal and dedicated. He worked with a minimum of staff members. He had a helper by the name of Thomas. He also had an assistant, George Reagan, he had a secretary by the name of Carol Ongst, he had a Mrs. Johonson, who was in a wheel chair and he managed to take care of all the college buildings with a staff of three janitors. However, the janitor service was not as adequate as he wanted it to be and the faculty and staff had to be tolerant concerning it.

I did not get to know the Robbins family. There was a son who had a very unusual career in the Navy and died about ten to fifteen years prior to the death of Mr. and Mrs. Robbins. This was a great blow to them because they had great confidence in him and he had been a very outstanding person. I was somewhat surprised when after Mr. and Mrs. Robbins died and I was
writing an oral history of the college and university, I called both daughters and told them what I had in mind and asked them if they would allow me to come to their home and we would put on tape their recollections concerning their days at the college. Both of them seemed somewhat reticent to do this and as a matter of fact, asked that I not come because they did not think that whatever they might have to tell us would be of value.

When it became apparent that Mr. Robbins wanted to truly leave the college, I started to look around for his successor. At that time Dr. John O. Gross was the executive secretary of the Board of Education Division of Higher Education of the Methodist Church. His office was in Nashville and about that time I was president of the National Association of Schools and Colleges. At one of the meetings, I asked Mr. Gross if he could recommend someone who might fill Mr. Robbins position at the University. He thought for awhile and then he said, "I wish you would consider Mr. Gerard Banks, who is the business officer at Centenary College in the South. He said that Mr. Banks had literally kept Centenary College alive. The President of Centenary had been raising money and using it to carry forth for the current funds for the school, the endowment fund was very small, and the cash flow was very, very delicate. Suddenly the president died and when the Trustees came to discover exactly what the situation was, they found themselves in a very difficult financial position. Dr. Gross told me that Mr. Banks was called upon to become Bursar at Centenary and really acting president. The situation was so severe that he had to go to the various creditors and say to them
that he was going to issue credit coupons and asked them to accept them so that the faculty could get food and other necessities for living. This was done and Mr. Banks very carefully husbanded the income and paid off the coupons and really saved Centenary. In doing this he had to make some rather hard decisions and for that reason Dr. Gross thought it would be a good idea if he changed positions.

I flew to Centenary and had dinner with the Banks. Mrs. Banks was very attractive. He was very outstanding and they had two boys Robey and Gerard Jr. I liked them very much and invited them to come to the University of Puget Sound and, of course, he came and stayed all during his active life. He was a very outstanding part of life and development of the University. I found him to be very business like, very friendly, a genuine educator, and a man of great ideals and principles.

Through the years there was a very fine relationship with Mr. Robbins. I was so pleased that it was possible for us to confer an honorary doctorate on Mr. Robbins for his outstanding contribution to the University and for his loyalty and dedication through the years. I saw him quite often; he sold his house and they moved to Wesley Gardens. I would see him at the Church meetings. I would also see him at Wesley Gardens when I spoke there once or twice each year. I always planned to spend one-half an hour or more with him and again say how much we appreciated his dedication and the fact that really the University was in existence because of his very astute financial management.
One time he and his wife came to the campus and at my invitation they came in and sat in the office and we talked for two solid hours. I recalled again their great dedication, the fact that she had been a most outstanding professor of Spanish, much beloved by everyone, that he too had been an outstanding professor of Spanish, that he had been the man who really structured the purchase of the new campus, that he had been the one that worked out the details for many of the buildings which were built and that he had sought and made dynamic the campaigns that Dr. Todd worked on and structured through the years and that really the University of Puget Sound and its predecessor, the College of Puget Sound was in existence because of the life and sacrifice he had given. I walked with them out to his car, thanked them again, shook hands with them in a very affectionate and meaningful manner little realizing that that was the last time I was ever to see him. Surely the life and work of Charles Robbins and his beloved lady are writ large in the lives of thousands of students and the University of Puget Sound.