

FREDERICK ANSTON McMILLAN

Professor McMillan came to the College of Puget Sound in 1924 having graduated from Willamette University in 1916 and receiving his master's degree there in 1917. He was a colleague of Dr. Todd's at Willamette University and was trained there in Chemistry. He was head of the Department of Chemistry and Geology of Idaho Technical Institute in the early 20's. He came to the College of Puget Sound as Assistant Professor of Chemistry in 1924. He jokingly told me one time that he did not know very much about chemistry and others who were coming were better trained than he so he decided he would start a Department of Geology. He liked to say that he got a barrel full of rocks, put them in the basement of Howarth Hall and that was the way the Geology Department got started.

In one of the unusual conversations that Dr. Todd and I had when he grew philosophical in his reminiscing, he said he realized many times that it was a mistake to bring Professor McMillan on the campus. Professor McMillan was basically a rebel at heart and he did not have a real academic background and training to be an acceptable professor. I recall one time going into his classroom to talk with him after class, looking on the blackboard and noticing in one sentence there were five misspelled words. I remonstrated with him and said, "Mac, there are five misspelled words in that sentence." He looked at me with disdain and said, "Well, Doc, my students do not come here for spelling. They come here to learn geology, how to work with oil companies, and how to earn a living." He had a very unusual

following of one-half to a dozen students each year and they literally worshipped the ground he walked on.

He was always a very ardent critic of the administration. He would say very snide things about Dr. Todd although it was through Dr. Todd's personal friendship that he came to the College of Puget Sound and Dr. Todd protected him from the criticism of many of his colleagues. I always felt he was tremendously insecure. That he felt he did not have the training and the degrees in the department in which he was teaching and it was quite an accident that he was there. He felt too, that in a very real way, there was no reason for the Department of Geology at the University of Puget Sound. I heartily concurred with him on this and felt always that he was not necessarily dedicated to the University, not basically loyal to it, and that he was a constant irritant in the faculty and among his colleagues. Many of the faculty told me that he was always quoting things out of context and also putting forth statements that were not necessarily true about the budget, the University, the Trustees, and Administration, Dr. Todd, myself, and the basic reputation of many of the faculty who were really trained scholars.

Because of his really being a misfit in the college, I spent considerable time with him, although I was never able to get him to be basically loyal either to the college or to me personally. Several years before it was time for him to retire, he came in and said, "Now, Doc, I want to work out a deal with you so that I can teach here as long as I want to. I do not want

to be caught in the 65 year mandatory retirement situation." There had been some very well trained and excellent professors who were kept on after age 65 because of the fact that we were very short-handed in faculty because of the heavy GI enrollment. He caught me somewhat by surprise, inasmuch as very recently he had been exceedingly critical of the school, both publicly and in his class and with his colleagues. I made one of my unwise statements in administration, I said to him, "Mac, you are not happy at the College of Puget Sound and, in a very real way, the College of Puget Sound is not happy with you. I think if I were you, I would contemplate being retired at the earliest possible day." I should have put my thoughts in softer words but I did not and from that day on he was an enemy of the school, of the administration, and especially of the President.

He was congenial and many students had great regard and affection for him. The rest of his colleagues did not consider him to be an adequate scholar in any field but more of a person who liked the academic environment and was willing to make any kind of compromise to stay in it.