

D. ROBERT SMITH

D. Robert Smith was a professor of organ and musical theory at the University of Puget Sound. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Indiana State Teacher College, his Master of Music Degree from Depauw University and he was recognized by the American Guild of Organists in 1934. He studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the National Conservatory in Paris. He taught at DePauw and then he became a professor at the College of Puget Sound in 1936.

He was affectionately known to the faculty as "D. Bob." He was a very striking and handsome person. He was organist for the First Methodist Church for the years he was at the College of Puget Sound. He was very popular with the music circles and with both the students and faculty. He was a very excellent musician and a very fine organist.

He structured the organ for the First Methodist Church at that time and did considerable agitation for a new organ and the development of the Wurlitzer Organ which was in Jones Hall. It had been purchased by Dr. Todd and the Board of Trustees from a theater in Seattle and moved to Jones Hall. Organ authorities told me it was never structured so that its true volume could have been used in Jones Hall because the Chapel auditorium at that time was too small.

D. Bob came to the house quite often and the family got to know him very well. We liked him very much. He came to me shortly after we were here in 1942 and said he thought he

ought to enlist in the service. He did enlist and was in the Navy. He spent quite a bit of time on the east coast. He would return from time to time and was always very well received.

When he returned from the service he was here for a short period of time and then came in one day and told me he had enjoyed his relationship on the east coast and wanted to transfer there for his future work. He had made contact with Bates College in New England and they had offered him a very fine position together with more money, more prestige, and an area in which he liked to live. There was nothing I could say except, "God bless you. Go with our good wishes."

I was quite surprised when, on occasion, the phone would ring and it would be D. Bob talking long distance from New England. He was very congenial, very friendly, he asked about his many friends, how the school was going, inquired about our health, and in every way it was a friendly gesture. About the second or third call, it dawned on me that D. Robert was not quite himself, that he was more loquacious, a little bit lisp-tongued, and it was with a great deal of shock that I realized he had evidently been drinking. The word came seeping back to the campus that D. Bob was an alcoholic and for that reason his position at Bates College was somewhat in jeopardy. Then the word came that he had asked for early retirement. Several years later the phone rang one night and it was D. Robert. I asked concerning his health and what he was doing. He said he

was enjoying his freedom, that he was retired and was enjoying every day of it. I asked if he was still at Bates and he said, "Oh, no, Bates let me go." I said, "They did, why was that?" He said, "Because they said I was an alcoholic and they did not want me on their faculty." I said, "Bob, is that true?" He said, "Yes, it is true and I am enjoying it." That is the last contact I have had with him.

Really, while he was with us he was an exemplary professor. He loved music, he taught music, he made students love music, the community rallied around him, he was a very good friend of Professor Jacobson and the music constituency of the college. I have great regard and affection for him and wish him always the very best.

October 1980