

## GENERAL JONATHAN M WAINWRIGHT

One of the outstanding people to visit the College of Puget Sound was General Jonathan M. Wainwright who had been the hero of Corregidor. He came as a part of the victory celebration and it was under the auspices of the War Finance Committee. We asked that he come to the University of Puget Sound and we were the key people in bringing him to the City. There was a military parade in his honor. The Chamber of Commerce had a meeting in his honor and there was a victory celebration at 9th and Broadway. I was asked to introduce him at the Victory parade which was very interesting.

He was, of course, on a tour all over the United States. This was in the days before television and I had arranged for three radio hook-ups to carry his speech when he received his honorary degree. All the details were arranged and everything was in its exact order except we did not know how long the General would speak at the Honorary Degree Convocation. I thought it wise to call the night before to Spokane where he was staying overnight after having had a victory celebration there. Unfortunately, I got his son instead of the aide and the son evidently had been at a party and he very frankly said, "The Old Man will not speak at your convocation." This was a very great blow because everything had been in readiness in accordance with our earlier conversations with his aides. I persisted that the plans were all made and that even if it were a brief speech that would be fine. In a rather careless and brusque manner the son said, "Under no circumstances would the Old Man speak

because he is tired." When I hung up, I sat in my office and wondered exactly what to do. Then it dawned on me that at Madigan Hospital there were some of the men that had marched with him on Corregidor. I called the General and told him the situation. I asked him if it would be possible to have some of the men who were with General Wainwright on Corregidor at the Convocation the next morning. He said, "We will have every man who is ambulatory there."

When we gave the honorary degree and normally it would have been time for the General to give his speech, we did not press the matter but simply said, "General, we have some of the men with whom you were associated on the Death March and they are here to honor you. The men came on the stage one by one (some were lifted up in their wheel chairs, the General put his arm around them and said, "Son, I remember you very well. God bless you." With tears in his eyes often times the General embraced them and there was a wonderful sense of rapport. It was much more effective even though it was going out over the radio than any speech the General could have given. It was a very successful moment and one of those where the human interest carried the day. We felt that ultimately, even though it was a great change in plans, it was very, very successful.

There were some tense moments in working with the military and working with the committee downtown but it was

also a very wonderful day so far as the students were concerned. They had a chance to see the General, to feel his presence and to see history in the making. This ceremony took place on Monday, November 19th, 1945. Besides giving General Wainwright a Doctor of Military Science, we also awarded Certificates of Valorous Service to the men who came from Madigan. The stories are found in the Tacoma Times for November 20th, 1945 on the front page.