

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

DAVID CHARLES GARDNER (1871 – 1948)

David Charles Gardner, Chaplain, Emeritus, died suddenly at the Palo Alto Hospital on December 31, 1948. He had been in indifferent health for many months but his death was entirely unexpected. It was a shock to all his friends in the University community and to Stanford men and women everywhere who had for many years thought of him as "The Padre," and on whose behalf he was active to his last day. His many services to the University were publicly acknowledged at a Memorial Service held in the Memorial Church on January ninth. An address was made by Bishop Edward Lambe Parsons, and a tribute by Chancellor Ray Lyman Wilbur was read, in his absence, by Associate Chaplain Robert MacFee Minto.

Born on February 27, 1871, at Huntley near Gloucester, in England, his education was that of a boy of the English middle class in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As a young man, he read law for a time. But illness interrupted his studies and in 1892 on the advice of his physician he came to the United States and to California. Entering the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, then at San Mateo, he was graduated in 1897 and assumed his first charge in the Richmond district of San Francisco.

In August, 1898, he was ordained a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church and came to All Saints Church, Palo Alto. It was during this service, 1898-1902., that Mrs. Stanford came to know the young rector and, impressed by his work with young people, asked him to become an aid to the newly appointed pastor of the Memorial Church, then under construction. Dr. Gardner came to the University in December of 1902, preaching his first sermon in the Chapel (Little Theatre) in the inner quadrangle. In 1903 he was appointed Chaplain and he continued to serve in that capacity until his retirement in June of 1936. On September 16, 1904, he became a citizen of the United States.

Breadth of outlook, tolerance of opposing views, but fine insistence upon principle and precedent, marked the early years of Dr. Gardner's service and increased with the experience in guiding the destinies of the Memorial Church. These were thirty-four years of devoted service to all men and women who came within the area of his activities. In the public eye it was seen that he reached in the Memorial Church and that he married hundreds of Stanford men and women in that Church. His sermons seemed to many of his listeners models of helpful guidance and inspiring comment, all illustrated from the best that he found in literature and history and philosophy, for he read widely and was known to all as a lover of good books. For years he offered course in Biblical History and Literature.

Of his conception of his work, Dr. Gardner once wrote: "Our anxiety is to make (the services of the Memorial Church) varied, simple, and spiritual in character and meaning. Being an undenominational church, it must avoid the things which divide, and exalt the principles upon which we can all agree. Thus, we say no creed. We know nothing of ceremonial--except the necessary rule of reverence and dignity. Many students do not care for church services. But the

church cares for them. I visit these delightful drifters in hall and frat. I catch them in the hospital. I invite them to my home. Office hours daily provide opportunity for friendly consultation. Sorrow, sin, and shame are not absent from student life. The parson is the friend of all--not alone of the pious." This summary is incomplete, for it fails to reveal that abiding sense of humor that lightened many a dark hour, and so marked his daily conduct with all fortunate enough to know him.

Instinctively Dr. Gardner had a fine sense of the fitness of things. He knew the ceremonial aspect of life and knew its place in a rapidly changing society. He presented the University to the public in a way always to elevate and to dignify, and he did much to perpetuate the ideas of the founders of the University.

When suggestion was made that he should write his story of these fateful years in the life of the University, he pushed the suggestion aside. Sufficient unto the moment were those deeds great and small done for so many over so many years. The record was in their hearts. He himself had deep satisfaction in the daily service of his fellow men. In the earlier years of his ministry, he often performed the duties usually associated with a Dean of Students. In the later years, under his inspiration, the Stanford Convalescent Home was established and under his guidance it was expanded by those who had caught his enthusiasm. It continues today as his memorial.

On November 19, 1898, Anna Berg became his wife and after brief residence in Palo Alto they came in April of 1903 to live in their campus home on Alvarado. This was the family home until 1936. Dr. Gardner loved the out of doors: the mountains where he was a fisherman of fine discrimination and notable success; the sea, where at Carmel in 1909 he built a cottage for vacation use. It was to Carmel that he and his wife retired in 1936, only to return to Palo Alto in 1942, to be near old friends and members of the family.

To his devoted wife and to the son Sherman and the daughter, Dorothy Talbert, and to the grandchildren we send this Memorial of our Appreciation.

Hazel Dorothy Hansen

Robert MacFee Minto

Edgar Eugene Robinson