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## In Memory of the Very Reverend Peter A. Brooks, S.J.

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## *In Memory of the Very Reverend Peter A. Brooks, S. J.*

The sudden and unexpected death of the Very Reverend Peter A. Brooks, S.J., came as a distinct shock to the university which he had served so well, and to a host of friends and admirers who had come to know him and to love him as an educator, friend and priest. Father Brooks had, in the little more than four years that he served as President of Marquette University, earned an enviable reputation as an educator and administrator. When he assumed the presidency of Marquette the university was experiencing the difficulties that beset all universities during the war years. The student body at the time numbered little more than three thousand. With the return of men from the services the university had to meet the needs of vastly increased enrollment, and had to provide greater physical facilities in plant, and an enlarged faculty. With no public display and with good judgment Father Brooks directed and controlled this expansion, so that when he died he was head of an easily functioning university of eight thousand five hundred students. But the most amazing thing about Father Brooks was that during all the bustle of expansion he never lost his capacity for friendship. His relations with students, individually and in groups, were surprisingly intimate and personal. Any special occurrence, joyful or sad, in the lives of students, faculty or alumni was certain to be signaled by a personal and friendly note. As a result, Father Brooks was loved as few men in comparable positions have been loved, and the sorrow at his death was the sorrow that men feel for a friend.

Father Brooks was a native of Wisconsin, born at Watertown, January 14, 1893. He entered Marquette University in 1916, and interrupted his course of studies to serve in the Artillery as a lieutenant overseas during the first World War. He returned to Marquette and was graduated in June, 1921 from the College of Liberal Arts. During this time he helped to organize the Students' Union, and to build the Union building. He also served as the first president of the Union Board.

He entered the Society of Jesus at Florissant, Missouri on September 2, 1921. As a scholastic he taught at Loyola University High School in Chicago. He was ordained to the priesthood in St. Louis, in June, 1931. Immediately upon the completion of his studies in 1934 he was

appointed Rector of Campion Preparatory School at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and held that office for three years. In 1937 he became Provincial Superior of the Missouri Province, which controls Marquette University, St. Louis University, Creighton University, Regis College, Rockhurst College, and several high schools. In 1944 he was appointed Rector and President of Marquette University.

His whole career after the completion of his studies and preliminary training was in administration and education. During the four years he served as President of Marquette University he showed himself to be a public-spirited, progressive civic leader, and became known as an eloquent and persuasive speaker, whose public utterances were always expressive of his Christian philosophy of life.

The ideals which he envisioned for the students of his university, and which he exemplified in his own life may be summarized in an excerpt from the speech he gave at a dinner in his honor, just after his appointment as President of Marquette:

"Every student who goes forth from Marquette should be, must be, an individual trust fund who will yield a high rate of interest in the intelligent, moral life that he leads as an active member of the community. The doctor, the engineer, the dentist, the lawyer, the liberal arts graduate, the journalist, the scientist, social or technical, the businessman, the nurse—these leave the University carrying with them the knowledge they will need for their profession or occupation. But above all this, they bring with them the high principles which enable them to live complete lives. They are what we style trust funds, set up by the University which gives students full opportunity for a well-founded and well-rounded education."

REV. EDWARD A. McGRATH, S.J.

