

THE HOUGHTON STAR

Memorial Edition

Volume XXVI

Houghton College, Houghton, N. Y., May 18, 1934

Number 26

Events of Life Recounted

**Prof. H. L. Fancher
Offers Reminiscences**

A list of the main events of the Dean's life follows:

Born, August 25, 1887.

Graduated from Cattaraugus High School, 1905.

Graduated from Cattaraugus Training Class, 1906.

Taught rural school, 1906-1908, 1910-1912.

Attended Houghton Seminary, advanced department, 1908-10, 1912-13.

Graduated from Oberlin College, June, 1914.

Principal, Hadley-Luzerne High School, Luzerne, N.Y., 1914-16.

Principal, Altamont High School, Altamont, N.Y., 1916-17.

U.S. Army service, department of aviation, 1917-18.

Married Zola Kitterman, Fairmount, Ind., 1920.

Professor, Houghton College, 1919-21.

Assistant, Uni. of Chicago, 1921-23. Received M.A., Uni. of Chicago, 1923.

Received Ph. D. in education, Cornell Uni., 1931.

Dean and Professor of education, Houghton College, 1923-34.

Died, May 7, 1934.

The order of children in our family, beginning with the oldest was: Ralph, LeRoy, LaVay, Bess, Marietta. I naturally at first looked up to Ralph, followed him and made him my hero. To Bess, LaVay was big brother and chum from the earliest years, and never has there been a quarrel between them.

My early memories of my younger brother are many. Outstanding among his childhood characteristics was his inquisitiveness and desire for adventure. He never tired of asking questions. Every new word had to be explained and one explanation led invariably to another.

I remember one morning when my
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POSITIONS REFUSED TO FOLLOW GOD'S CALL

On another page of this issue Dr. McMillen alludes to the attractive offers which Dean Fancher received when he had finished his work at the University of Chicago. One of them was the position of the head of the department of economics in the University of New Mexico, a position with a future in the secular educational world, and with a future financially far beyond what a small denominational school could offer. Other economics positions were offered in and about Chicago in various colleges and universities. While at Ithaca he was urged by his major professor and the head of the graduate school in the department of education to declare himself open for appointments which they were sure he could get. But he refused all such suggestions because he felt the call of God to Christian education.



Willard LaVay Fancher

The purest tribute, the most valuable token, we can bring to a noble life, is the emulation of that life. "Prof. LaVay" loved his Master, and he loved his fellows, excluding none. He taught us that a man can have faith without fanaticism, can have honors without being spoiled, can work with all classes of people and win the respect and the love of them all. He shall not have lived and died in vain, if by this means others may be led to know his Master.

Dr. Fancher Showed Keen Sense of Humor

Houghton faculty will not soon forget a social evening held in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Price Stark shortly after their marriage, and what they will remember especially well will be the humor of Prof. W. L. Fancher. Dressed in his soldier garb, stern of countenance, he brought in the guests of honor as if they had been prisoners at the bar. They were arrested for a grave misdemeanor—getting married. As he delivered them a solemn charge, no gleam of amusement crossed his countenance, even though all those about him were convulsed with laughter. A professional entertainer could not have done better.

When Paul Steese selected Dr. LaVay Fancher to act as best man at his wedding some three years ago, he found that his immediate marital problems were to be well taken care of with very little worry on his own part. Dr. Fancher suggested the beautiful Sage Chapel at Cornell University as an ideal place for the ceremony, but that seemed definitely "out" inasmuch as neither Mr. nor Mrs. Steese were alumni of Cornell. However, Dr. Fancher went directly to the "Powers that Be," and the impossible became possible! (We all had quite a laugh, afterwards—a Mennonite and a Wesleyan Methodist being married in an Episcopal Chapel by a Methodist minister.) After the ceremony, all details of which were arranged beautifully by Dr. Fancher, the bride and groom were taken immediately to the hotel for a reception. It was apparent that Dr. and Mrs. Fancher and Miss Rachel Davison, maid of honor, had made numerous purchases early in the day for this occasion, including a number of things which were later found useful in the household, such as a rolling pin, hammer, and a celluloid toy which young Peter now waves in the air.

The wedding breakfast and a Good Friday musical service followed. By that time the Fanchers and Miss Davison decided to journey to Houghton-ward, and the newly-weds

Many Organizations Feel Loss

To attempt to express the loss that Houghton College sustains in the death of Dr. Fancher would be impossible. As a superior teacher in the fields of education and economics, as Dean of the College, as chief adviser to the President, as the one chosen to assist in making contacts with the State Department of Education and with the Middle States Association of Colleges, and as a member of the President's cabinet, his contributions were extensive and of great importance.

The local church, recognizing his abilities gave him numerous and responsible positions from which it can ill afford to lose him. He was a member of the building committee for the new church and chairman of the board of stewards. Likewise the denomination found him useful. He was a member of the executive board and of the book committee, and general secretary of the W.Y.P.S.

Academic and religious organizations found him a valuable adviser. He was director of the Allegany County Y.M.C.A., and of the Genesee Country Association, and of Allegany County School District No. 1. He was a member of the Schoolmaster's Association of this county and of the American Legion.

All of the positions mentioned he held at the time of his death.

Sighed with relief, inwardly, that they had not been showered with rice, and that no shoes or signs had been attached to their car. But they were a bit "previous," for just as the parties took their leave—right on the main street of Ithaca—the bride and groom were showered with what seemed an inexhaustible supply of confetti! And when they reached their hotel room they were greeted with the usual shoe display hanging from the door knob. But no! This display was unusual in that Dr. Fancher had hauled those old shoes all the way from Houghton just for the occasion.

Failing Health Precedes Death

Dean Worried Over Imaginary Sense of Failure

The death of Dean Fancher occurred on Monday morning, May 7, at about half past six. During the preceding night, he had twice taken sleeping medicine, the second dose at about three o'clock. The amount, therefore, was greater than that taken on any previous occasion. It is believed that the added restlessness and tension which frequently results from this type of medicine when it fails to operate, added to the distress of already taut nerves, troubled mind and racked body, was one of the causes contributing to the final catastrophe.

Dr. Fancher's illness began in October with teeth infection. When the trouble became markedly worse a little before Christmas vacation, he had all the upper teeth removed thinking thereby to remedy the trouble. The effect was quite the opposite. The infection previously localized apparently spread. For three weeks he could hardly eat or sleep. Subsequently this condition was somewhat alleviated only to recur during the last weeks of his life. In consequence his health was impaired. By February the slump was noticeable, and it continued from then until his death. However, at the advice of a physician, he continued his school work until within two weeks of the end.

A very definite break came early in April. A little before Easter vacation he suffered an attack of influenza, which added to the disability caused by tooth infection. A nerve specialist in Buffalo whom he visited during the vacation period said that his body was like a house ravaged by fire, the inside of which would all have to be built from the foundation. The sensation of internal burning which the Dean suffered in his last days substantiated this view of the case, as did also the shooting pains that tortured him whenever he tried to think. He likened these pains to an electric current passing through his forehead.

Worry began to fasten upon his mind after his first siege of sleeplessness. Trivial things looked like mountains. One thing after another harassed him. His mind ran the full gamut of worry possibilities and dwelt on each one. And this in spite of the fact that he had no real anxieties, financial, family, religious, social or academic. He was in sweet communion and harmony with God, his relations with his family his neighbors, and his colleagues of the college were all more than usually happy. He was the President's most intimate and trusted adviser. His greatest distress, the thing that finally crushed him, was the thought that he had failed in his responsibility to the college and to the church. This

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"When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me,
Lo, it glows with peace and joy."

Funeral Services Held

**Rev. J. R. Pitt, Pres. Luckey,
and Dr. Willett Speak**

The funeral services of Dr. W. L. Fancher were held Wednesday, May 9. A brief service at the home at 9:30 was attended by the family, members of the faculty, and college seniors. The entire student body, grouped according to classes, formed a procession to the college chapel, where the body lay in state, attended by Senior and Junior guards until the afternoon service.

At two o'clock a large group gathered to pay their last tribute to Dr. Fancher. The service began with the hymn "Jesus Lover of My Soul," sung by the College Male Quartette. Rev. I. F. McLeister, Editor of the Wesleyan Methodist, offered prayer, followed by the Scripture reading from John 11:1-27 by Rev. Dean Bedford. The Rev. J. R. Pitt brought a challenging message from Matthew 11:28-30. Following this, President Luckey gave a resume of Dr. Fancher's life, and an appreciation of his great contribution to Houghton College. Dr. Willett spoke of Professor Fancher's relationship to the Wesleyan Methodist Church, emphasizing those personal characteristics of sympathy, tenderness, wisdom, administrative ability, consecration and fidelity which made him a leader. The service was brought to a close by the quarter's singing "Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide."

(A full account of the funeral including the sermon and remarks made by Dr. Willett and President Luckey can be found in the STAR of May 11.)

REVISION OF CATALOG —DEAN'S LAST WORK

One of the tasks which has been under Dean Fancher's personal supervision for years is the compilation of the college catalogue. Execution of detail, not often associated with administrative capacity, was demonstrated in this work to a marked degree. The edition for 1934-35, published less than a month ago, represents a part of the work to which he gave his last attention. Feeling it was his personal responsibility, he was not willing to delegate even the details of composition to others in spite of failing health; but pushed it to early completion with the same driving force which has enabled him to bring to consummation every task undertaken.

This particular number represents far more of his time than is apparent to a casual observer. The opening section was reorganized and classified. The organization of the departments of instruction into six divisions necessitated a complete revision of the academic section. Changes, suggested by the Middle States Association, such as the incorporation of the Schools of Music and Theology as divisions of the College, called for a great deal of work and thought to effect accurate correlation.

THE HOUGHTON STAR

Published weekly during the school year by students of the College.

STAFF: Alumni Committee of the Faculty.

Extra copies of the issues of May 11 and 18 may be secured for five cents each by applying to Willard Smith.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office, Houghton, N. Y. under act of October 3, 1917, authorized October 10, 1932. Subscription rate, \$1.00 per year.

Editorial

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

Dean Fancher—La Vay—is dead. Only this single staring fact stands out now with appalling clarity. Our mentor, our colleague, our friend has gone forever. But when lagging realization overtakes our grief, it is inevitable that we shall be beset by agonized inquiries concerning the why of existence, and age-old but ever-recurring doubts of Eternal Justice. No iteration of pious platitudes, no mere affirmation of faith can comfort in the face of the flat finality, the absolute negation of physical death. Our moral integrity, our very sanity demand that we confront at this time the full facts of life with all their tragic implications.

Yet as we allow ourselves to think—and even dare to pray—we sense some flashes of prescience, some gleams of hope to lighten “the burthen of the mystery of all this unintelligible world.” We fail to understand our own essential natures if we do not accept the human limitations as well as the divine possibilities of “such a being as man in such a world as this.” We must recognize the pathological fact that there are slow, insidious diseases that impair personality besides the lesion of the sudden blow that blots out memory, or the brain injury from the swift bullet that destroys identity.

Do we, in fact, question the bravery and the loyalty of the shell-shocked soldier, who returning from a volunteer charge trembles at shadows? And do we doubt the trust and the affection of the fever-tossed child who in its delirium does not feel the tender touch of the mother, or hear her yearning words of pity? Or do we think of the senile old man, bedridden and befouled by “sluttish Time,” who may not know his tearful children, as the authentic individual; or rather cherish the memory of the virile, clear-eyed man in his prime who has demonstrated his paternal love by a lifetime of devotion and sacrifice?

Thus we choose to remember La Vay—the real La Vay who was only temporarily obscured and whose true self is now free from “the contagion of the world’s slow stain.” His was a rare and charming soul. He was endowed in unusual measure not only with those intellectual gifts which cause life to be more dignified but also those social graces which make living immeasurably sweeter. That urbanity which comes from the union of the cultured spirit and the Christian character and which most of us fail ever to acquire wholly, was his by instinct. We can even comprehend that his concealment of his mortal hurt until he was beyond human help was due to an inversion of his noblest qualities. And as for divine aid—we must believe that there are natural and spiritual laws and processes which God Himself cannot—and does not—abrogate, even to save Himself.

This Memorial Number is therefore peculiarly fitting and altogether proper. Dean Fancher’s essential character and influence—his distinguished scholastic attainments, his inspiring success as an educator and an administrator, his constructive services to the community, and his lifelong devotion to the School and the Church—must be preserved in the minds of his students and associates as something precious and imperishable. And for those of us who really knew and loved La Vay, the memory of little things like the genial warmth of his smile, the kindly humor of his look, and the friendly inflection of his voice, will persist in spite of the accident of Disease and Death and beyond the illusion of Time and Fate.

—R. W. Hazlett

WHOM SHALL I SEND?—Here Am I Send Me

A good and useful man has fallen, the vacant place is large, we miss him much, we scarcely know what to do, but shall we falter and grow discouraged? Nay, verily, rather let us gird up our loins, close up the ranks, and determine with God’s help to carry on the work, of which he was so nobly doing his part.

To Dean Fancher belongs in large part the credit and the honor of the development of Houghton College. He definitely prepared himself for teaching and administrative work in the field of Education, and early in the history of the college literally gave his life with all his might, mind, and strength, to building up this institution.

In 1923, the year in which the college was chartered, he was elected Dean, and took upon himself practically all the duties relating to admissions, grades, and curricula, thus making it possible for the writer to devote

his efforts to the matters of finance. In this position, Dean Fancher became the right hand man to the President and together they worked as David and Jonathan. Whenever the President needed help and advice, Dean Fancher was usually the counsellor, and the friend who accompanied him in his important interviews at Albany. During all these years, there was never a break in this co-operation and this friendship, and we shall miss, oh so sadly, this man on whom we leaned so heavily. But could he give us counsel I am sure he would urge us to carry on the great work that God has given Houghton College to do.

—James S. Luckey.

To the Faculty of Houghton College and Seminary

It is with sincere appreciation that we express to you our thanks for the numberless expressions and tokens of sympathy and love which you have shown us during our bereavement. You have made us feel that we all belong to one large family.

Mrs. Zola Fancher, Gwendolyn, Max,
Bess M. Fancher
Marietta Fancher
Ralph D. Fancher and Family.
H. Le Roy Fancher and Family.

His Splendid Manhood and Service—A Challenge

I have been asked to say a few words about Dr. Willard LaVay Fancher as I have known him.

The task is not easy, for our fellowships lay, during the thirteen years of our acquaintance, largely in matters of spiritual interest, in the realm where appreciations are difficult of expression.

Brother Fancher was a man who saw far and clearly. He was willing to consecrate himself in labor toward a distant goal. Without being visionary or impractical in any sense he was profoundly susceptible to the challenge of “the things that are not seen but that are eternal,” the things that make for the best in life.

His appreciation of these spiritual values carried him far beyond the motive of mere personal advantage. He labored in the light of those values as he understood them for others and very largely for others only. In this, the debt of service which he charged against himself was far beyond his strength, and the price is paid today in part at least in his untimely passing and in our distress.

But for him the warfare is over. The Great Shepherd who cares for His sheep has gathered this broken member of His flock to a higher fold, and there shall be for him no longer any sleepless nights of agony, no sorrow and no more distress.

To us remains the memory of the splendid manhood of the days of his strength, and the challenge to give to those tasks from which his hands have fallen the unstinting measure of our service.

Joseph R. Pitt, Pastor.

Failing Health Precedes Death

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sense of failure was coupled with fear lest his mind, which he recognized as failing to function normally, would never regain its natural clarity and power. He was broken. He realized it, and was in anguish.

Worry was a habit to which Dr. Fancher was not normally addicted. The future was like a great panorama, full of joyous expectation and interest. He was a man of vision. The outlook was always bright.

The Professor La Vay who ended his life was not the La Vay whom his colleagues of Houghton knew. Under great physical and mental strain, his very logical and careful mind broke, and when it did, it gave opportunity for his subconscious mind to function practically uncontrolled. It made real, things that absolutely were not real. It formulated into a plan and carried into action things that if ever thought of under normal conditions would have been positively and immediately spurned.

To the Students of Houghton College and Seminary

We want you to realize that you have made us feel your real love for our loved one; that your sympathy is from the heart. For all the kind expressions of helpfulness and appreciation we truly thank you.

Mrs. Zola Fancher, Gwendolyn, Max,
Bess M. Fancher
Marietta E. Fancher.
Ralph D. Fancher and Family.
H. Le Roy Fancher and Family.

Events of Life Recounted

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mother and some of the children were at the home of my uncle, Sylvester Bedford. It was at family worship and we were kneeling at our chairs. La Vay was about four years old. He succeeded in laying his head flat down on the bottom of his chair and shoving it under a cross-bar in the chair back. Here he was held in pillory until the adults released him at the close of the worship period.

I do not remember the exact age at which he was converted, but from early childhood he prayed in the family circle with the rest of us and gave testimony to his faith when opportunity was given. We were early taught the value of prayer and it has not only been a sacred memory with all of us, but also a daily practice.

When about thirteen or fourteen years of age, La Vay went to work for a neighbor, Mr. Bolivar Lamb, for several months. Mr. Lamb was an aged Christian man who had no children, and who lived less than two miles from our home. On the dairy farm La Vay arose at about sunrise to get the cows, then worked all day with the older “hired man” and Mr. Lamb. He had been used to farm work but this was his first experience away from parents and brothers and sisters. I distinctly remember his homesickness on his first visit home, the tears he shed when it came time to return. There awoke then within me a consciousness of my love for my brother which I had never so keenly realized before and from that time I have had an ever increasing realization of the strong bond between us.

His summer was not easy, but he learned many valuable lessons. He found he could do things and also make friends. He so won his way into the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Lamb that they wanted to adopt him.

Then he entered high school. He was soon one of the most popular lads in school although we were very poor. After finishing high school he studied in the teachers’ training class and at eighteen was engaged to teach our district school at home. At the close of the first term a man from another community desired to secure him for a school in which the disciplinary problems were acute. He knew La Vay and wanted a “man teacher.”

La Vay accepted the position, put a rubber hose in his desk and started making friends with the boys by entering into their sports with them. All went well for a time until one Friday night he came home very tired, feeling that the discipline was gradually slipping away from him. He was just about discouraged. I had taught school and as an older brother took it upon myself to counsel him. This was the plan. He should give a brief talk at the opening of school on Monday morning, telling the pupils he had come there to keep good discipline. He felt that they were trying gradually to test

him and get back into their unruly habits. Therefore it would be necessary for him to punish the older mischief makers on general principles. He executed the plan. One by one before the whole school he called out five of the older boys and applied the hose. He came home that night as though walking on air. It may have been a rash thing to do, but it worked in that case. It gave him confidence and it pleased many of the parents. He was engaged to teach the school the next year also.

Then came two years of college work at Houghton. During the spring of the second year La Vay became ill and was at home during the rest of the year. By fall he regained sufficient health to engage to teach a country school. As soon as he found himself able to handle the work his former confidence and buoyancy returned. After two years more of teaching he returned to complete his college work.

La Vay was built for high speed. He could never be content unless he was accomplishing something of importance or planning and working toward something larger and better. Before he finished college, he had spent a summer in South Dakota on a large grain farm, another in Virginia studying geology and had made more than one trip as far west as Kansas.

In early life his interests were so varied that he did not know what his life work would be. He and I used to talk of being law partners. He would do the more public work and I would tend the office and help lay the plans for his part. He was proficient in every field. Nothing was without interest to him. Note the variety in his training. In undergraduate work he took a major in geology; for his Master’s degree he attended Chicago and majored in economics; his doctorate led him well into the field of rural education. His army work was first as a lieutenant in the field artillery. Then he studied the construction of airplanes and their motors. Next he learned to fly, but more than that he was responsible for the government’s hangars and a million dollars’ worth of planes at the same time.

He was foresighted in business ventures. Before he finished his college he owned a farm, which he had bought while he was teaching. After keeping it a year or two, he sold it to advantage. When he was in Chicago he bought an apartment house and held it for some time. He has acted as a salesman for various companies and always with credit to himself. He has sold soap, grass seed, life insurance, and helped circulate the *American Agriculturist*. Never did he hold a position but his employers desired to retain his services, and never did he make a failure of any business venture, though he sometimes sustained minor losses in investments.

Others can tell of his work for the college and the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, so I pass over that. His outstanding characteristics as I think of them were: his passion for worthy accomplishment, his sincere love for his friends, and his desire for true righteousness. He took us who knew him best directly into his confidence. He consulted us and counselled with us. But more than that he freely spent himself for us and planned and worked for us all. Father leaned on him for counsel and executive ability in many a difficult problem. He planned the moving of a barn, disposal of timber in the woodlot, and the building of a new barn after a fire, handling the difficult details himself. He was a born administrator and he never took any advantage or manipulated anything to the disadvantage of another. Again he advertised and helped to sell the home farm when the proper time came.

We have worked together in many ventures: in salesmanship, in school problems, in the chicken business, in farming, in social affairs, and in family matters. Into them all he entered vigorously. He never did anything by halves. He was foresighted. He was conscientious. He could handle men, make them do what he wanted, and make them enjoy the doing of it. His motto seems to be in his

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own words: "We'll never start anything we can't finish." When his health broke as a result of poison from infected teeth, and he couldn't sleep, and couldn't accomplish his work, he suffered very intensely.

La Vay married at thirty-two years of age. He found in Zola Kitterman just the right mate, as he so often told us and as was evidenced by all who knew them. There was never a jar in their home life. La Vay was an ideal husband and father, but while he lived for his own, he also wanted to share the joy of home with his friends, as hundreds can testify.

When any of us were in trouble he was always the first to sense it and was always on hand to help. How like the Master he was! And why not like the Christ who dwelt in his heart? Good brother. Wonderful Christ!

H. L. Fancher.

Major Professor Discusses His Work for the Doctorate

The news of the untimely death of Dean W. L. Fancher came as a great shock to all those who knew him and worked with him during his graduate work at Cornell.

Having already done more than two years of graduate study at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, Dean Fancher entered the Cornell Graduate School at the beginning of the second term in 1929 to complete his work for the doctorate in secondary education, rural education, and rural economy. He finished his work and received his doctor's degree in the fall of 1931.

Dean Fancher was a man of sound scholarship. He was a severe critic of his own work and was satisfied with nothing less than his best. He brought to bear upon his graduate studies in Cornell a broad background of information and an understanding and insight growing out of rich and varied experience. His wide study of economic problems and questions gave him an exceptionally fine foundation for his study of education in which he was deeply interested. He was especially interested in the problems of providing adequate educational facilities suited to the needs of modern life for the boys and girls living in our rural communities.

Dean Fancher impressed all who came in contact with him as a man of unusual sincerity and earnestness of purpose. His sterling character and high ideals were reflected in everything he did and in the attitude he took on all educational and social questions. In his passing education has lost a devoted worker and leader.

Emery N. Ferriss,
Professor of Education
Cornell University

Reminiscences of Childhood and College Days

Only those who have been closely associated with Dr. Fancher can realize the loss Houghton sustains in his passing. He has unquestionably woven himself into the very fabric of the institution, for he has been connected with it for more than a quarter of a century.

He was among the first group of students under the leadership of President Luckey, about 1909 to 1912, to become college conscious. It was then that I first became acquainted with La Vay. During this period he came West with my brother Gail and me to work in the harvesting and the threshing. Although I had known him rather well before, I feel that I became intimately acquainted with him that summer, for we worked together, ate together, and slept together. Jovial by nature, he had a sense of humor that made him an enjoyable companion.

As a student few could surpass him. He set high standards and he aimed to live by them. He was serious and thorough in his intellectual pursuits. In his passing, education, especially Christian education, has suffered an irreparable loss—the loss of a true friend.

Theos J. Thompson.

I am deeply sorry to learn of the passing of Dr. La Vay Fancher. When he was a young boy my father was pastor of the church where the Fancher family attended, and as the families became friends I have known him since childhood. I shall never forget how he used to tell stories to, and entertain, us younger children. This same kindness became an intrinsic part of him when he grew to manhood and made him the friend of all who knew him. He was ever been characterized by his capacity for hard work, his studiousness, and his devotion to high ideals.

In his death his family and friends, and the college to which he chose to dedicate his life sustains an irreparable loss.

Mable Dow Thompson.

The LaVay of Cattaraugus High School

I feel honored in being invited to express my appreciation of the late W. La Vay Fancher, Ph. D., Dean of Houghton College.

Mr. Fancher was a class-mate in high school of my son, Dr. Harold B. Johnson. He was a frequent visitor in our home. I have been much interested in his career, knowing him more or less intimately from his early boyhood. He stood for high ideals, never letting anything interfere with the ultimate accomplishment of his purpose and aim in life.

Too great praise cannot be given for the pluck and courage of this young man; his thirst for knowledge and for an education which he obtained at great sacrifice, were most commendable; difficulties that would overwhelm a less courageous soul never daunted him. He lived a thoroughly useful, helpful Christian life, exemplifying those sound traits of character that will live to honor him very many years. I regard it a privilege to have known him.

I never knew one more delighted and enthusiastic in his chosen profession; his faith in and admiration for Houghton's President, Dr. Luckey was unbounded. Houghton College has sustained a great loss.

F. E. Johnson,
President, Bank of Cattaraugus

Undergraduate Days—From A Fellowstudent

My first personal contacts with Professor Fancher were in the days when we were students together in Houghton back in the days when Houghton was struggling for recognition as a college. Back of his quiet, somewhat reserved manner were apparent certain elements which immediately impressed me with the feeling that La Vay was a sincerely conscientious student of more than ordinary ability. He wore well. While he never pushed himself or his qualifications forward yet his rugged honesty, his industry, as well as his sterling qualities of mind and soul deeply impressed themselves upon the minds of all his classmates.

All through the years that have intervened since those first contacts were made the impressions then formed have been broadened and deepened until it seemed that he was the embodiment of that fine spirit of Christian scholarship and culture for which Houghton has stood from the days of its founder, the sainted W. J. Houghton, to its present pinnacle of achievement under the consecrated leadership of President Luckey.

Houghton will never be quite the same again, to those who knew him, without Professor Fancher's smile and warm hand clasp of Christian fellowship to greet us as we return to the old familiar campus. Measured by days and years his has been a short life. Measured by that truer standard, achievement, his has been a long and most successful life. This world has been enriched by his having lived in it. We who remain are made the poorer by his passing. Heaven is made more desirable at the thought of the reunion in that realm where farewells are unknown.

Ralph Davy.

Oberlin Days

In September, 1913, six of our Houghton College students transferred their credits to Oberlin College and were registered as fully accredited Seniors. La Vay Fancher was one of our number. From the standpoint of scholarship, La Vay did very creditable work, graduating with his class with recognition of those qualities of real manhood that he had evidenced throughout the year.

Mrs. Wright and I made our home the center of the Houghton group in every way possible for us to do. The boys came away from their own homes and seemed to enjoy ours. Every Sunday afternoon we all spent an hour there together in talking over our spiritual problems and praying with and for each other. It was not a club but rather a brotherhood. It was during these hours that La Vay and I became fast friends as we freely talked together. I shall not soon forget the precious hours thus spent. Our problems were the more acute because of the almost constant challenge to our faith that grew out of the newness of so many things. But we stood true to our best ideals and learned to expand the religious life without sacrificing fundamentals. I believe La Vay has never flinched from the standards and principles of his beliefs of those Oberlin days.

F. H. Wright.

His Choice of Careers, Related by Dr. Mc Millen

At the University of Chicago, a dozen years ago, W. La Vay Fancher stood on the threshold of his career. His Master's degree earned, a vista of various paths lay before him. Some paths led to commanding positions. These paths were lined with flattering inducements. Another path, devoid of tangible attractions yet alive with opportunities of service to others, presented itself.

We discussed the telegraphed offers he was receiving. He must reach a decision quickly on this problem which he realized was one of the greatest he had ever met. Hundreds have been helped as a result of that decision.

It was not with nonchalance that he took up his duties at Houghton College. He saw the stupendous potentialities in the lives of his students. Saw them more clearly and threw himself more wholeheartedly into his work than most of us. Because of his unusual abilities many other duties were thrust upon him as we all know.

A typical incident of his busy life comes to mind. A call for his help came from a conference. He slipped from the class room, made the long trip and in a unique, effective manner brought harmony and understanding in a matter highly important to college and church. Then back through the night he drove so that no interruption might occur in his college work.

Thus he labored winter and summer and spared himself never. Time he might have spent for recreation he gave to the work at hand. Caring not for the cost he spent himself unreservedly and from the Master he shall receive greater reward.

Today our hearts are bowed with grief since from our midst has gone our choicest friend, counsellor and brother.

Sim I. Mc Millen, M. D.

Personal Memories—Chicago And Ithaca

Have you ever been really homesick? If you have, perhaps you can imagine what it meant to me when, after a month at Wheaton College, far from home and former friends, I stepped off the train in Chicago to find friends waiting for me. I do not mean to imply that people at Wheaton were unfriendly—far from it! But these were old friends; indeed, they seemed almost members of my family. And throughout that long school year Zola and La Vay Fancher made me more than welcome whenever I could get away to go and visit them.

Fortune has favored the continuance of our friendship. A little more than a year after my graduation we were all back in Houghton once more, and the

my stay there was of only two years duration, Rushford, where Charles and I have since lived, is near enough for the exchange of frequent visits. It has been a very great pleasure to us during these years to run down to Houghton to see the Fanchers or to have them visit us in our home.

Then, there was the summer when La Vay was working for his Doctor's degree at Cornell and Zola and the children were in Indiana. We were very happy to have him drop in at our apartment frequently and make himself at home as with old friends. Later, that same summer we spent a few days in camp together at the lake. On other occasions, too, we have enjoyed together the simple pleasures of the out-of-doors.

We enjoyed greatly his enthusiasm and his interest in things that were of interest to us. He was quick to grasp the possibilities of any situation and was always ready to make helpful suggestions. He was a friend to whom one could go for advice and counsel, knowing that he would give his best, based upon sound judgment.

Our lives have been greatly enriched because we knew Professor Fancher. In his passing we have, in common with many others, suffered an irreparable loss. We are glad and proud to have been numbered among his friends and we shall miss him more than words can tell.

Edith and Charles Pocock

Y.M.C.A. Positions and Interest

The spirit of cooperation between Houghton College and the Allegany County Y.M.C.A. found root for a fine development in the fact that both organizations were dealing with Youth, laying strong foundations for character and Christian leadership.

The spirit of team play found expression first in the use of the college gymnasium for indoor athletic meets conducted by the association, for the church school boys of the northern part of the county.

Later, when the association came into possession of its beautiful camp site on the Genesee River, Houghton students, both men and women made use of the camp and its equipment for over-night retreats. The personality of Dean W. L. Fancher was always in the lead to give meaning and value to every occasion.

Doctor Fancher made his greatest contribution to the association and its program when he accepted a place on the Board of Directors and later served as president of the organization for two years. The dispatch and business ability that his leadership brought to the association through his varied contacts with men of the county was forceful and grew to be a genuine asset in the movement for Christian character and fellowship. Under his guidance Houghton was usually the first community of the county to complete its work for the annual budget of the association.

I shall always think of Dean Fancher as a personal friend who lived on a high plane and like the Master he served spent his time, talent and resources in the service of his fellow men.

S. F. Lester.

Genesee Country Association Tribute to Dr. W. L. Fancher, Director

To know Dean Fancher was to know a many-sided man, so unassuming that few were privileged to become acquainted with his real self. You at Houghton knew him as an administrator, counsellor and educator. He was ever in search of the truth as his three collegiate degrees attest. To us, outside the classroom and college walls, Dean Fancher envisioned a region that was not merely beautiful in its physical attractions but also in its character. Veneer had no appeal to him, but genuine beauty and quality did.

As a director of the Genesee Country Association he always supported those measures and policies which were destined to have real and lasting values. I not only prized him as a personal friend but all of our directors and associates interest-

ed in the development of the Genesee Country, had the highest regard for his judgment and vision.

His new home on the hillside, not only typified his rugged ideals but to us who pass by, we are reminded with Sam Walter Foss that he, too, "lived in a house by the side of the road...and was a friend to man."

Guy Comfort.

Victory Over Temptation Related in Last Message

The student body of Houghton College have an invaluable privilege in recalling the last message of their beloved Dean, Dr. La Vay Fancher. It was given as a chapel talk early in February. This testimony rang with the note of glorious victory in the Lord Jesus Christ; victory over the powers of darkness; victory over the greatest temptation that had come to him; victory over the one who is mighty through Him who is Almighty.

In his address, Dr. Fancher read a statement which had been made during his year of study in Cornell University in 1930. During a certain period of that year, the subtle temptings of the enemy appeared, bringing with them the struggle which was to end in their defeat. A decision had to be made. Mr. Fancher, being accustomed to seek the Lord's guidance in all things, brought this matter to his Heavenly Father, with the result that God always brings—perfect peace. Though the enemy did not give in easily, Mr. Fancher testified to the absolute power of God in his life. No matter where he went, in the street, among his fellow students or in the home, he felt the very close presence of the Lord by his side.

The testimony of Dr. Fancher's life may be given in the verse: "Thanks be to God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

His Connection with County School Interests

Just as the history of a country is largely the biographies of its statesmen and outstanding citizens so the lives of its statesmen and citizens are largely what the school systems have helped to make them. Their hopes and fears, aspirations and philosophies, judgments and decisions are unconsciously woven into their lives through the teachings of these school systems.

Not only through professional relationships but also in connection with varied business and social activities the writer had the privilege of long and intimate association with the late Dr. Fancher. Out of these associations there came a warm friendship and, on the part of the writer, a high regard for the judgment and counsel of Dean Fancher. As an analyst he was keen, thorough and impartial. As a mediator he was resourceful and tolerant. His vision was broad and deep, and always focused on the field of larger and better opportunity for the full development of youth.

It was the writer's privilege also frequently to travel with Dr. Fancher to and from meetings in the county, and on these occasions the conversation invariably led into the field of educational and social problems. One always emerged from these discussions with broadened vision and renewed hope, for the Dean's faith and optimism were contagious.

The removal of Dr. Fancher from our circle at the period of his greatest activity and usefulness is an irreparable loss to this supervisory district and to Allegany County. We shall miss him as a friend and as a co-laborer in the field of education. But education is better for having experienced the influence of his life and work and for the ideas and ideals which that life and work have left with it. We shall cherish his memory, and accept with the poet this thought:

"Believe the muse, the wintry blast of death
Kills not the buds of virtue; no, they
spread,
Beneath the heavenly beams of brighter
suns,
Thro' endless ages, into higher powers."

F. L. Tuthill

Ist Prize in June Contest an Event of Houghton Days

"We'll ne'er forget our college days." Indeed we won't! And one of the things that keeps alive those fond remembrances is that "Twas there long friendships first begun." With me one of the choicest of those was the one between myself and La Vay Fancher, for back in the years 1908-1910 we were here in the college together. We were not surfeited with time for the forming of friendships, either. He worked for his living for Rollin Houghton, where Mr. Krause now lives, and I for Mr. Bedford, where the Dean of men now lives. But one year it was different. Four of us fellows lived in the same home: Le Roy, La Vay, one Clark Clemens from up Ogdensburg way, and myself. La Vay was almost an ideal college chum, always making his contribution in the way of wholesome fun, in challenge to high accomplishment, and in outstanding personality factors.

La Vay of the old days was the same inveterate worker as the Dean Fancher of more recent years. The farm work back on the Cattaraugus County farm was dragging during one of those springs. He took the problem by the horns and went home to help. Aching muscles didn't seem to interfere with high thinking, for out of that month there came an oration, "Gems of Education." It won first place in the June contest. It is likely that that was one of the most carefully and thoughtfully prepared student production ever presented on the Houghton platform.

By casual contacts through the years, by collaboration on the Houghton College Faculty during more recent years, and finally by becoming neighbor to one of the best neighbors anybody ever had, the association of those college days has grown into an influence of the greatest value to me, and the memory of it all has now become one of my most cherished possessions.

—Stanley W. Wright.

Mr. Molyneux Writes Two Tributes

The letter which accompanied Mr. Max Molyneux' tribute to Dean Fancher contained an intimate reminiscence which we would not like to omit. He says:

I have found it very difficult to compress my own personal feelings within the limits set. As a result, I have not tried to do that at all but have merely epitomized the experiences and associations of years in a few abstract statements. They sound cold and lifeless in comparison with the reality of my love and admiration for the man. I could tell so many incidents illustrative of his unique character. Perhaps you will recall that we spent some time together camping in the late summer of 1931. Never before had I been so vividly impressed with those two qualities which he possessed in such marked degree: a deep and sincere spirituality, and a most uncommon reverence for and pleasure in the common things of life. So many beautiful memories I have of those few days and how they all rush in on me as I write to you of them; I shall treasure them always.

In his message, particularly designed for this memorial edition, he emphasizes Dr. Fancher's versatility, and breadth of interests and sympathies:

In an age distinguished chiefly by its devotion to the attainment of purely selfish and materialistic ends, it is extraordinary to find a man who has devoted his talents and energies in the interest of others. To few men is given the opportunity to choose a career from as many widely different fields as Dr. La Vay Fancher might have done. In him were united the qualities of executive ability, breadth of vision, and magnetism of personality to such a degree as would have made him a leader in almost any field of human activity. Many of our so-called great leaders are intellectually superficial but his was a keen and analytical mind that like a powerful search-light illuminated any field upon which it was directed.

However, to these qualities of character were added others yet more unusual: a

certain magnanimity of soul and profoundness of faith which led him to forego all other purely personal ambitions and dedicate himself to the cause of Christian education. Concerning his influence as a teacher in Houghton it is almost superfluous to speak. Those who knew him will carry to the end of life the treasured remembrance of a man so sympathetic and tolerant in his attitude toward all with whom he came in contact. His fine sense of humor, his geniality, and above all his humanity, all of these qualities mingled to make of him such a man as Shakespeare describes:

His life was gentle and the elements So mixed in him that nature might stand up And say to all the world, *This was a man!*

Max Molyneux

His Interest in Christian Truth

I am glad to add a few words to those of others expressing my personal appreciation of the life and character of Dr. Fancher. My opportunity for observation and acquaintance is no doubt from a slightly different viewpoint than that of others who will commit their estimates to writing, owing to the fact of our kinship. We of the Rathbun Clan loved him. He was a favorite among us. Genial and self-forgetful, he was always planning for the common good and lending his energies for the good of all.

He has been a frequent visitor at our home during the past ten years when he had occasion to spend the night in transit to and from Albany and Syracuse. It was always a joy on such visits to discuss intimately with him a great variety of subjects, chief among which were Christian doctrine and experience. These conversations revealed an ever increasing interest in the Word of God, and an expanding knowledge of its unified message. His vision of truth and authority was far greater than the scope of any sect or organization. He was especially attracted by the prominence and program of the doctrine concerning the return of the Lord, and this vision was necessarily giving color to all his conceptions of Bible truth. He was, however, no hobbist.

In the circle of relatives, as in the college and community, his place cannot be filled. He is absent, but accounted for. Our love is unchanged. He has simply gone on to join the advance company awaiting the larger reunion of the redeemed, when, Some from earth, from glory come, Severed only 'till He come," we shall all be changed, and "together with them be caught up to meet the Lord in the air."

Dean S. Bedford.

His Tolerance and Genuineness

Every true friend is unique: when he passes on no one ever really takes his place. New friendships may be formed, but the vacant niche is never filled. Many of us were proud to count La Vay Fancher as a member of the inner circle of our friends; we are sadly conscious that that circle is now broken and will never again be complete.

La Vay possessed all of those special qualities which we require of our closest friends. He was, first of all, friendly in manner. Without excessive display of feeling, he made one realize that his inner attitude was one of friendliness and kindness. This made him approachable and encourage others to reciprocate in his friendliness.

He was interested in others. However harassed by his many labors he found time to share the interests of his friends no matter how trivial or personal those interests might be.

He was considerate of the feelings and opinion of others. He did not try to dominate. Ready to state his own position with frankness and to act with decision, he respected the opinions and motives of those who differed with him. He knew how to engage in spirited discussion without descending to mere argument.

Finally, La Vay had that one quality upon which any abiding friendship must be founded: he was genuine. We never questioned his friendship but accepted it at its face value. It did not occur to us to doubt his sincerity. We never wondered what he was saying about us when out of our presence.

The most significant tribute I know how to make is this:—He was a true friend.

Ward C. Bowen

A Tribute from The College Physician

Dean Fancher's character was a fair expression of his inheritance and training. He inherited a good brain, and improved it by a thorough education. Thus he was a most reasonable man, for he had within his ken the vast variety of circumstances which make human beings what they are. He was a man of fixed and high ideals and principles, but he was no dogmatist. In all his relations with other people he was controlled by reason, by kindness, and by his innate respect for humanity in general. He was a high type of the cultured, liberal Christian gentleman. It was a privilege to have known him, as it is a profound sorrow to have had him cut off from life at so early an age.

Dr. A. H. Lyman

A Student Appreciation

Someone has said that the teacher you like the best is the one you like the best after a lapse of years. It was fourteen years ago that I entered my first class under Dr. Fancher. As the years have sped past there has been on my part a growing appreciation of his ability. He had that rare knack of leading the pupil to like the subject at hand and to study it with other aims than simply passing the examinations. The time spent in class was full of intellectual activity. I never knew him to wander from his subject though he often gave interesting illustrations from real life and personal experience. He seemed to understand the peculiarities of each student and adjusted his method to the need. It was not difficult to make progress when he was the teacher.

He has many friends among the students, because he was friendly and because his friendship was that deep, practical, lasting, beneficial kind. We mourn his departure and hope to emulate his virtues as we cherish his memory.

Royal Woodhead

Tributes From Students, Friends, And Faculty

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" said David upon the death of Abner. Dean W. La Vay Fancher was a prince and a great man. He possessed a capacity for friendship equalled by few men. He was approachable and appreciative, unselfishly giving of himself to help others and further the cause of our institution and church. Though modest and self-forgetful yet he was ever-ready to face responsibility and execute leadership. We loved him for his sterling worth—a loyal friend, a true fellow-worker, a brother beloved—a real Christian gentleman. May his noble spirit ever grace our Alma Mater.

Claude A. Ries

A vitally prominent member of our great Houghton family has been lost to us. Words are hollow and forceless in such a case, but those who majored in Dr. Fancher's department grew to know him as a forceful, efficient teacher; one with a complete mastery of his subject; one who inspired his students with the greatness of life, and an appreciation of the finer things. Houghton and Houghtonites are vastly richer for his having lived and worked with us.

Warren Thurber, '32

His outstanding personality evidenced in his efficient work and in his social contacts won for him lasting friendship and high esteem.

His departure is indeed a great loss both to Houghton College and the educational field of the country.

As the light we receive from some of the stars left them hundreds of years ago so the light Dr. Fancher sent out will shine on for many years to come.

He was a Christian gentleman of sterling character.

Mark Bedford, Pres. of class of '25.

A friend in whom I found the type of manhood I longed to have. A friend who was never too busy nor too tired to give a bit of cheer or render a helping hand when the load was heavy. A friend who made my path smoother, who made my life a thing of joy. A friend whose memory I will always hold amongst those unseen blessings which money nor blood cannot buy.

Edward Dolan

"The passing of Professor La Vay Fancher has stirred, in the deep recesses of our heart, the sacred memory of a most revered teacher, a deeply esteemed friend, and a living example of a Christian gentleman motivated by the power of God."

Charles L. White, Supv. Prin. Girard Public Schools.

I have been deeply saddened to know of the death of Dean Fancher. I have known and appreciated him for quite a period of years. I can appreciate something of the shock which is passing now through Houghton College, and I want you to know that Marion College extends her most sincere sympathy in this hour.

Wm. F. Mc Conn

Mrs. Baker and I feel keenly the deep loss and sorrow which the people of Houghton have recently experienced. We join in sending an expression to our many friends and co-workers. It is our sincere prayer that the God in whom we trust shall sustain and uphold you and give you renewed strength and courage.

Herman Baker

I can still remember the first time I ever met him, and that occasion seems now to remain most sharply outlined in my memory. It was at the time of my preliminary visit to Houghton before coming to teach in the department of English in 1930. I had proposed a certain course which at first evidently impressed Dean Fancher as not desirable. I can still remember how those sharp brown eyes of his swung around at me as he questioned the wisdom of my proposal. I then and there realized the care and love he had for the quality of work done at Houghton, an impression of him that was well confirmed as I came to know him better. Houghton has lost a man who loved her dearly and served her well. I personally feel a great loss as I think of the world without Dean Fancher in it.

L. A. King

Dean W. La Vay Fancher was a man among men, a thinker among intellectuals, a righteous man among Christians, a teacher among students, a companion among young men, and an inspiration to all whom he contacted.

Fred L. Bedford.

During my years at Houghton my major courses of study were in the field of economics and were conducted under the personal supervision of Dean W. La Vay Fancher. I came to know him well, both as a teacher and as a friend. I feel that in his death I have suffered a great personal loss, and I extend my heartfelt sympathy to his family and to our school.

Keith G. Farner

Professor W. L. Fancher and family, I have been happy to call my friends. You can be very sure that I felt extremely bad about his untimely death. I feel deep sympathy for his people.

Alfred Johnson, '26.

I consider Dean Fancher an ideal Christian gentleman.

E. Brown

"An admirable character, a fighter for the right, and a great man—Houghton's loss is inestimable. Mere words cannot do justice to his useful life. Fate plays queer tricks on humanity. Yet we must carry on, great as an individual shock or loss may be. Dean Fancher was an inspiration to many; he seemed to be the epitome of everything for which Houghton stood. Grant that God may sustain our late Dean's family and that our Heavenly Father may somehow lend a helping hand to Houghton College."

Virgil H. Hussey

The witness which he bore to the triumph of Christian faith has been a source of great inspiration to me. His faith was not an intangible optimism. It was a confidence in the love of God as manifest in the grace of Jesus. In the stress and tension of daily life this trust, invisible yet potent, proved its own reality. From his example, may we take courage to live as followers of Christ!

Richard V. Graham

Whenever his neighbors were in trouble, Mr. Fancher was quick to see where he could help and that in so many "little, nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love." Such acts may not be spectacular, but they are endearing.

Clara Belle Lang

Most of us feel that we would not leave a big hole in the universe. Here was a man whose friends and admirers are probably in a very real sense countless. People who did not know him personally felt as though in some way they had suffered a tangible loss. The hundreds of personal friends are beyond so definite an expression of loss and grief. However, because they knew him they personally understand and find comfort in their mutual friendships and their mutual friend.

Lovina A. Mullen

Houghton has lost a strong friend and supporter. I shall always remember him as a personal friend and one interested in my problems.

Charles E. Thompson, Prin. Lisle Union School.

His personality won a lasting place for him in the heart of every alumnus. I sincerely believe that no student ever had a more loyal, staunch and true friend. Dr. Fancher will always occupy a prominent place in the history of Houghton College.

Marshall L. Stevenson, '31

We prized Dr. W. La Vay Fancher very highly as a strong, thorough teacher, a good disciplinarian, a kind friend and counsellor, and a loyal Christian. Especially did we appreciate his interest and support during the bringing of the message at the Young Peoples' Convention a year ago. His enthusiastic response was an encouragement to do the best possible. The most lasting impression we have of Dr. Fancher was the time when he bid us farewell last Commencement. He met us alone on the campus after leaving the chapel, and with much feeling he tenderly expressed his regret that we were leaving and wished us a very fruitful and successful ministry. We shall always hold him dear to our memory.

Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Van Worme

A God-dedicated superior intellect can but impress even casual acquaintances. The many who have met Dr. La Vay in personal contact—and such has been my privilege for over fifteen years, in class, on the campus, at church, in the home, at the lakeside camp during his last summer at Cornell—gladly testify that his influence was deeply telling both as a Professor and a true Christian gentleman.

"I cannot say and will not say that he is dead—

He is just away!

He has wandered into an unknown land, And left us dreaming how very fair It needs must be since he lingers there. And you, O you, who the wildest yearn For the old-time step and the glad return Think of him faring on as dear

In the love of There as the love of Here. Think of him still as the same, I say—

He is not dead, He is just away."

Erma E. Anderson, '29