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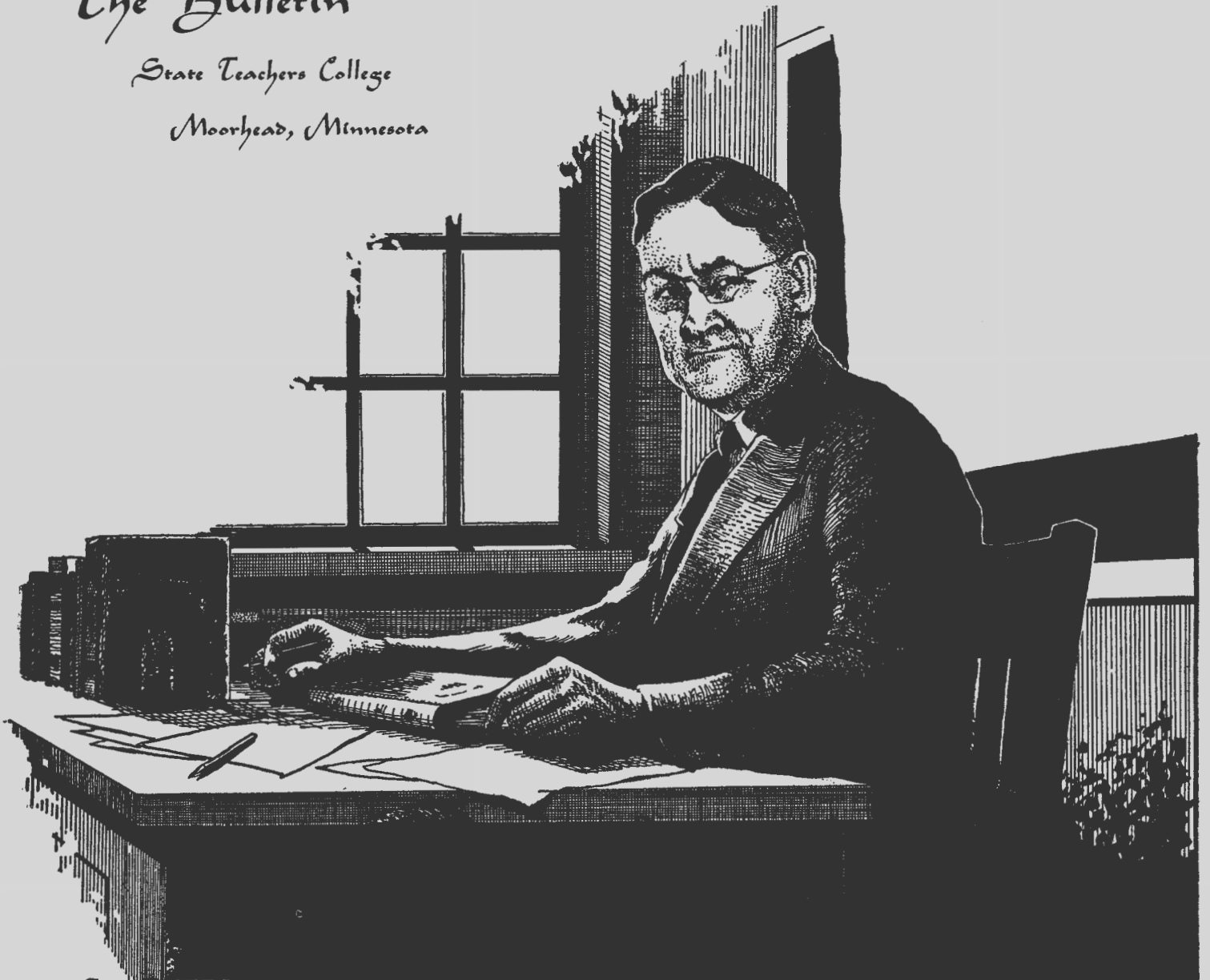
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State Teachers College

Moorhead, Minnesota



MEMORIAL TO

Samuel G. Bridges

Series 48

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A Biography

DR. JOSEPH KISE, *Chairman of Division of Social Studies*

Samuel Gaither Bridges was born May 17, 1883, in Newton, North Carolina, the son of Washington Wilson Bridges and Louisa Hamrick Bridges. He was the twelfth of thirteen children. After completing his studies in the rural school of his home community, he attended the college preparatory schools at Catawba College, Salisbury, North Carolina, and Doan Academy, attached to Denison University, Granville, Ohio. At the latter institution he earned both his A.B. and M.A. degrees. Later in life he did advanced graduate work at Ohio State University, University of North Carolina, and the University of Minnesota.

Besides his academic work at college, Mr. Bridges was very much interested in debating. In his senior year he was awarded forty dollars and a gold medal for his ability as a debater. He was also president of his literary society and one of three student speakers when he was graduated from Denison University.

While doing undergraduate work at Denison University, he joined the Student Volunteer Movement. Asthmatic difficulties, however, made it impossible for him to accept an assignment in a foreign mission field.

Mr. Bridges was an ordained minister in the Baptist Church. In addition to his college teaching, he frequently served as pastor in neighboring communities, and was always ready to fill a local pulpit upon request.

Prior to coming to the Moorhead State Teachers College in 1921, Mr. Bridges taught at Alderson-Broadus College, Philippi, West Virginia, 1909-1910; at Denison University, 1910-1912; at Phoenix (Arizona) High School, 1914-16; and at the State Teachers College at Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1919-21. He joined the faculty at the Moorhead State Teachers College in 1921 and served as chairman of the Division of Social Studies until 1951, when he reached the retirement age. He taught also at the Colorado School of Education, Greeley, Colorado, during the summer of 1924.

After retirement from the College, Mr. Bridges served as pastor of two congregations, one at Mayville and the other at Hillsboro, North Dakota. However, when a vacancy occurred at the college after the Christmas vacation, he was called back to take over again the work which he loved. He continued to teach till the end of the first summer session in 1952.

Mr. Bridges was married to May Villinger in 1910. Four sons were born to this wedlock: Edward Villinger, James L., John Conrad, and Samuel Gaither. Mr. Bridges is survived by his wife, three sons, and several grandchildren. Edward Villinger died in 1923.

On October 7, 1952, death came to Mr. Bridges, who will long be remembered and respected by all his former students as a beloved teacher.

Mr. Bridges: His Faith and Work

DR. O. W. SNARR, *President of the College*

Shortly before his death, I had a pleasant visit with Mr. Bridges in his home. He told me then that he was reconciled to the inevitable outcome of his illness. The members of his family, he said, had attained maturity, his work was finished, and he was ready to go when the call should come. He then asked me to speak at his funeral on his work in the College and his philosophy of life. I can find no better words, I believe, to describe his point of view about life than those I have quoted. He recognized the scheme of the universe and submitted to it without resentment. When he was able, he gave himself wholeheartedly to those things he thought worthwhile. When he realized he could no longer be of service, he looked optimistically to the future. Mr. Bridges may have had the same point of view about death as the noted artist who was on board the Titanic when it struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic. As the ship was sinking, he was heard to say, "The greatest adventure of life is death."

For eleven years Mr. Bridges and I worked together intimately. During those years of close association, I learned to know him well, both as a man and as a member of the faculty. I learned to know him best as a teacher. He liked to teach. He liked the inspiration he got from contact with youth. In teaching history and sociology he had the good judgment to place emphasis on trends and movements and ascribe to facts a place of secondary importance. This kind of teaching is not always popular with college students. But Mr. Bridges was willing to forgo momentary popularity for recognition that comes with time and sober judgment.

I heard Mr. Bridges say once that he was content to place greater value on the judgment of students concerning his work five years after they had been out of college than on their judgment at the end of a course. Students coming back to the campus ten, fifteen, twenty years after graduation almost invariably inquired about Mr. Bridges and made it a point to see him. He had the ability to recall the names of former students, and they were pleased to have him call them by name and greet them with a cordial hand shake.

Measured by the standard of research in leading universities, Mr. Bridges did not claim to be a great scholar but he had many of the characteristics of a scholar. He was intellectually curious, he read widely, he kept himself up-to-date on developments both domestically and abroad. He possessed that kind of scholarship essential for good teaching.

Mr. Bridges had a high degree of intellectual integrity. He manifested this through his frankness and his willingness to stand by his convictions. Even though he found himself in a minority, he would not condescend to curry favor for the purpose of winning popularity.

Mr. Bridges had a fine sense of loyalty. He was loyal to the College and to the Administration. He did not always agree with the Administration, either in policy or in methods of implementing policy, but when decisions were finally

made he gave the Administration his full support. I know, too, that he worked diligently to promote the interest of the College and to give it his full support.

Mr. Bridges was a deeply religious man. He was an ordained minister. He was always ready to participate in college activities that required the services of a minister. He took part frequently in the Commencement program of the College by giving the invocation and benediction. Both students and faculty liked to have him serve in that capacity.

Mr. Bridges served the College for a period of thirty years. By graduate study at three of the leading universities of the country and by wide reading, he qualified himself professionally as a competent college teacher. As head of the Division of the Social Studies, he was the educational counselor for students specializing in history, sociology, economics, and political science. This responsibility gave him another opportunity to come in contact with young people. He was a good counselor, but I am inclined to believe that he enjoyed his contacts with groups of students even more than he did with individuals.

In faculty meetings and in faculty conferences, Mr. Bridges was wise in his counsel. He was not often the first to speak but his voice was always listened to with respect. He was frequently called on to draft documents summarizing faculty discussions and faculty decisions. He is the author of the Constitution of the Faculty which is the official instrument for the faculty in its deliberations.

Perhaps I can give the key to Mr. Bridges' success as a member of the faculty and as a teacher by quoting a statement he made in response to the suggestion that perhaps he should have continued in the ministry. He said, "I have no apology to make for being in school work. I feel I have been an influence for good in it."

Even though Mr. Bridges will no longer be a member of our group, his influence will continue to manifest itself in the work of his associates and in the life of numerous students who came under his kindly and effective guidance as a teacher and a counselor.

To all who knew Mr. Bridges and who came under his instruction, I commend the example of his life as an inspiration for intellectual integrity, for genuine loyalty, and for professional and Christian service.

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Memorial Scholarship Fund
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The Bridges Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in October of 1952 by faculty and alumni of the Moorhead State Teachers College and by friends in the community. This fund, from which loans are available to deserving students who wish assistance in pursuing their work at the College, is a living memorial to the late Samuel G. Bridges.

Mr. Bridges as a Colleague

DR. BYRON D. MURRAY, *Director of the Upper Divisions*

What is it to be a colleague? A colleague is defined as an associate in office, professional employment, or special work; and since it comes from the same root as the word "college" it is most appropriate in connection with a fellow teacher.

The writer came to Moorhead Teachers College in 1926 as a member of the English department. There was no special reason why Mr. Bridges as head of social studies should have gone out of his way to make me feel at home, yet this is what he did. How well we remember the little personally-conducted tour around Fargo-Moorhead and the lake country that first colorful autumn! From that time on we became increasingly aware of the historical background of this area, and through his interest in geography and climatology also were helped to see it in a new light. Mr. Bridges had a mind open on the one side to what science could reveal and on the other, to the values in our culture which are preserved through history, religion, and the humanities. His predispositions were neither primarily scientific nor artistic, yet he entertained a respect for all the areas of educational, psychological, and scientific study; he participated in and on occasion helped plan programs and lyceum numbers which revealed his interest in music; and he treasured ideas memorably expressed with a life-long devotion. Hardly a month went by that Mr. Bridges did not come in to inquire in his genial manner about the source of some passage from prose or poetry which he wanted to use to point up his teaching or include in a speech or sermon. And there were occasions when his memory was more accurate than that of the literature department, particularly when it came to a bit of Americana. An ordained minister, his knowledge and understanding of the greatest of the great books probably surpassed that of most ministers, since he could throw upon it the illumination of historical perspective.

A colleague is not only a fellow worker on the campus, but a person whom one may meet in community enterprises, in professional meetings, at church, in the home, on an outing, or informally at lunch. Mr. Bridges was professionally and non-professionally an interesting person, always courteous and amiable, yet frank and sincere and independent in thought. He was genuinely interested in people, in events, in causes; he was not interested in gossip, recriminations, small talk. He was always refreshingly himself, often with a delightful, deliberate humor.

Perhaps in the last analysis a colleague to be remembered is one who is not only sociable and cooperative, but whose whole climate of opinion is honest and wholesome. Mr. Bridges' disposition, his personal life, his civic and religious life, his philosophy, his professional accomplishment were all of one piece. He was motivated by, he lived and taught the great liberal traditions of democracy and Christianity. Better than most of us, this teacher of the social studies knew the source books of both traditions.

Also, if you would find greatness in your work, you must have that consuming passion for those with whom you work. Some years ago I was walking along the street in Moorhead when I met up with one of her citizens. His business was buying and selling potatoes. After some passing remark he said, "Teaching must be awfully tiresome work, going over the same thing time after time." My reply was, "People are more interesting than spuds." Oh, I know that potatoes are necessary, and somebody must produce them and handle them. But I prefer to work with human nature. During my first year out of college, the head of the school where I was teaching gave me a little book in which I found this sentence, "You have not achieved real greatness in teaching until you reach the point where you are as much interested in your least attractive pupil as in your most interesting." I realize that this is an ideal, and, like many of the ideals of Jesus, few ever attain to it. It is, however, a goal toward which you may constantly strive.

In the third place, to achieve greatness, I believe you must have a sense of being in partnership with God. Within recent times there have come from men in all the walks of life statements to the effect that the only thing that can save us from the present chaotic world condition is a revival of the fundamentals of religion, a greater feeling of dependence upon God. And this can come only as individual men and women have a stronger sense of the presence and power of God, and of their cooperation with him in the great task of reclaiming the world. No one who honestly seeks the improvement of world conditions will enter upon a work into which he cannot take God as a partner.

Under our American system of separation of church and state, it is not possible for you as teachers in the public schools to be teachers of religion. But it is possible for you to recognize that what you are speaks with a much louder voice than what you say. And it is possible for you to be so filled with the idea of service to mankind that all who come into contact with you will feel the pervasive influence of a God-directed life. In every branch of that great field of activity which we call education, we emphasize the fact that what we are striving for is the discovery of the truth.

In conclusion, then, let me urge you to join the ranks of those who see life and its activities as an opportunity, as a challenge to do your part in the building of character which is based on unselfish service to humanity. After many years of searching in vain for the Holy Grail Sir Launfal returned to his castle, an old man, broken in health, disappointed in his work, but having built into his character that human sympathy for the needy which can come only from unselfish service. And in response to that challenge, do not be afraid to give to that task all the powers that you possess. And if you do that, when you come to the end of life's journey, you will be able to say with the great Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."