

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

GRAYSON NEIKIRK KEFAUVER (1900 – 1946)

The death of Grayson Neikirk Kefauver, on January 4, 1946, interrupted in the midst of its power a career devoted to the improvement of education both nationally and internationally.

Born in Middletown, Maryland, on August 31, 1900, his education and experience ranged widely over the country. His Bachelor of Arts degree was obtained at the University of Arizona in 1921, his Master of Arts degree at Stanford in 1925, and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota in 1928. By the time he returned to Stanford in 1932 as Acting Professor of Education, to become Dean of the School of Education the following year, he had behind him teaching and administrative experiences in elementary and high schools in Arizona and California, and university teaching experiences at the University of Minnesota and Columbia University. Just prior to his return to Stanford he had been a member of the staff of the National Survey of Secondary Education. Although he entered upon the deanship at the age of 33, he had already achieved national recognition among his colleagues and he brought to his new task an unusually rich and appropriate background.

Coming to the position as Dean of the School of Education upon the recommendation of Ellwood P. Cubberley, his distinguished predecessor, he served actively during the years 1933-1942, after which, on leave, he devoted himself to problems of international education. During his years as Dean, the School of Education reflected his initiative and energy through an increased staff, enlarged student body, and varied program of instruction, research, and public service. Several large-scale investigations, all experiments in cooperative research, were undertaken with the aid of substantial grants from foundations. There included the Guidance Study, the Language Arts Investigation, the Social Education Investigation, and the Santa Barbara Project. During this period, new emphasis was placed on curriculum, instruction, guidance, and teacher-training. Cooperative arrangements, including joint staff appointments, were made with other departments within the University, as well as with the public schools and Menlo Junior College. The expanding work of the School was facilitated by moving in 1938 into the new Education Building, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Cubberley. The vigor of the School as it undertook its work in the new building was a tribute both to the long devotion of Dean Cubberley to the School and to the able manner in which Dean Kefauver had been able to build on the earlier foundations.

In addition to his activities as leader of the School of Education, Professor Kefauver found time and energy to participate in national educational movements, holding several important offices, editing yearbooks for national educational organizations, and collaborating in the publication of several books in the fields of guidance and the teaching of English. This phase of his career was fittingly climaxed by his election to the presidency of the National Association of College Teachers of Education in 1942.

As we entered the war against the Fascist powers, he saw beyond the military victory to the enormous reeducation problems which would follow the war. He went to Washington and carried on almost single-handed a campaign to interest our national government in taking official recognition of the situation through creating some sort of international office of education to give attention to these problems. His refusal to be deterred by one obstacle after another finally bore rich fruit in the establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an agency related to the United Nations Organization. This success was not achieved in one step. He first created, and in 1943 became the chairman of, the Liaison Committee on International Education. He was the prime mover and chairman in the same year of the International Education Assembly, which laid the groundwork for the new agency before the San Francisco conference. At San Francisco UNESCO was created as part of the United Nations Charter. In the fall of 1945 the president of the United States appointed Professor Kefauver to serve for the United States in establishing UNESCO, with the personal rank of Minister. The draft charter for the international body, which is in final stages of ratification, is based on that which he prepared for the United States Department of State. It was while engaged on duties in connection with UNESCO in this country, prior to his return to England, that he met his death.

Professor Kefauver died in the midst of enthusiastic and energetic activity. This is as he would have wished it. It is a satisfaction that he lived long enough to see his dream of the international educational agency come true - a dream which he more than any other man caused to be embodied in reality.

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