

Albert L. Kohlmeier*

In the death of Professor Emeritus Albert L. Kohlmeier on December 28, 1964, Indiana University lost one of the most versatile, learned, and humane of its faculty members. Dr. Kohlmeier was born at Mackey in Gibson County, Indiana, on March 24, 1883. As a boy he studied at a one-room country school and later rode horseback to attend Oakland City High School seven miles from his home. After graduating from this high school he enrolled at Indiana University where he earned the A.B. degree in 1908. Three years later he received the A.M. degree in history from Harvard University, and in 1920 the Ph.D. degree in history from the same institution.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kohlmeier began his teaching career in a one-room school in southern Indiana. He soon became chairman of the history department at New Albany High School, and shortly thereafter he was made principal of Oakland City High School. Undoubtedly these experiences reinforced one of his abiding characteristics—his appreciation and respect for mankind. He brought to his academic career a deep affection for the people from whom he sprang, and his understanding of and generous attitude toward others expanded and ripened into a sympathy for young people and a concern about them as individuals. These qualities were the foundation of his devoted service as one Indiana University's greatest teachers. In his teaching he distinguished himself in the fields of American colonial history, American diplomatic history, and American historiography.

Professor Kohlmeier became an instructor in history at Indiana University in 1911, and remained with his Alma Mater the rest of his life. He became a full professor in 1920, served as head of the history department from 1926 until 1948, and retired from active service in 1953, at which time he was made emeritus. Even then his teaching career was not ended for he later taught part-time at the Indianapolis Extension Center. Under Professor Kohlmeier's leadership the Department of History grew in stature and became one of the University's strongest departments. Its graduate program was large, but interest in and responsibility for the preparation of

* This tribute to Albert L. Kohlmeier is taken from a resolution adopted by the Faculty Council of Indiana University.

undergraduates, especially those planning to teach, was never overlooked.

Professor Kohlmeier's service to the University was manifest in many ways other than that given through the history department. He served on numerous committees, especially those concerned with basic university policies; he represented the University at functions both on and off the campus; he was counselor, academic and personal, to students and colleagues alike; he helped interpret the University to the citizens generally; and he felt a personal responsibility to represent the University at its best in his own personal life. His commitment and loyalty to Indiana University were deep and abiding. His criticisms of university policies, more frequent than many realized, were expressed in committee sessions, personal conferences, and away from the limelight.

Professor Kohlmeier's scholarship was both broad and deep. Many graduate students thought, at times not without justification, that he knew some areas of study outside his specialization as well as or even better than many men who taught those fields. He read widely, reflected carefully upon what he read, and spoke less, not more, than he knew. Despite an unusually heavy schedule, he wrote book reviews, articles, and a heavily documented study entitled *The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of the American Federal Union* (1938).

He was a long-time member of the American Historical Association, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and the Indiana Historical Society.

Professor Kohlmeier also reserved time and effort for his home, his church, and his friends. In 1910 he married Lucie Mayhall and their happiness was life-long. His devotion to the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomington was grounded in humility. The warmth of his personal friendships reached men from all walks of life. He was equally at home with farmers and neighbors, colleagues at the University, and leaders of state. Conservative in his views, he was unusually tolerant and understanding. Possessed of infinite common sense, he lived among men as one of them. Professor Kohlmeier constantly served Indiana University from 1911 until his death in 1964. He generously gave his best to his Alma Mater, repaying it many times over for its contribution to him.