

# Interregnum at Hamline



AT THE TIME the depression of the early 1930s hit the nation's colleges and universities they had for a decade been adjusting to the changes wrought by World War I and the 1920s. The economic boom created pressures on the schools to expand. The clash between new strains of liberalism and traditional values and beliefs rocked campuses. The "Jazz Age" image of college life was a controversial issue, and intercollegiate sports competed with literary societies, debating teams, and other intellectual activities for student attention.

All the private liberal arts colleges in Minnesota experienced the strains of these developments. Hamline University, a Methodist institution located in St. Paul, was no exception. The growth of the Twin Cities had engulfed the campus in an urban setting. By 1925 rifts in the structure of the 71-year-old school were showing: a too-liberal theologian was forced to resign by pressures from the conservative faction in the Methodist church; the school lost several talented younger scholars to better positions; a coach with a losing record was fired; and enrollments began to decline from over 500 to 400 students by 1930. Efforts to reverse these trends led to covering deficits with capital from endowment funds, which were further weakened by the agricultural depression that began in the early 1920s. Half of Hamline's two-million-dollar endowment was in farm mortgages.<sup>1</sup>

Ill health forced President Samuel F. Kerfoot to re-

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sign in 1927. His successor, Alfred F. Hughes, had revived a faltering college, Moores Hill, moved it to Evansville, Indiana, and dramatically increased endowment and enrollment. At Hamline, Hughes seemed intent upon repeating his success. He expanded his administrative staff, launched expensive public relations efforts, introduced a new curriculum, and proposed various plans for transforming the university. The deficit spending continued to mount.<sup>2</sup>

The crash of 1929 and the onset of the depression were considered temporary phenomena. "Prosperity is just around the corner," was the current Republican

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent introduction to the general context of the period 1900–40, see Merrill E. Jarchow, *Private Liberal Arts Colleges in Minnesota: Their History and Contributions* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society [MHS], 1973), 47–53. On the 1920s and 1930s, see Grace Lee Nute, *In Hamline Halls, 1854–1954*, chapters 10–12, a multifaceted centennial study of the university written in the mid-1950s and privately printed by Hamline in 1987; on the departure of theologian Charles Horswell and the firing of coach D. C. Mitchell, see especially 236–239. See also an institutional study by David W. Johnson, *Hamline University: A History* (St. Paul: n.p., 1980), 66–121.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Muriel McEachern and Thelma Boeder, archivists at Hamline and the Minnesota Methodist Conference; Patricia G. Pateron, Walter A. Kenyon, and Anne Simley for helpful interviews and correspondence; colleagues in the offices of the president and registrar at Hamline; and Dr. Garvin Davenport and Mary H. Marsh for critical readings of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Here and below, see Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 243–254; Johnson, *Hamline*, 92–103.

# The Year the Faculty Ran the School, 1932-33

Richard R. Marsh



political slogan. As revenues and enrollment fell and deficits mounted even higher, Hughes continued his course. He suggested moving Hamline to the vicinity of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis as a satellite two-year liberal arts college, offering only humanities and social science courses. This threatened the faculty, which by now distrusted him. When the full measure of the economic plight of the nation—and the school—became obvious, Hughes had alienated key members of the board of trustees, some segments of the church, many alumni, and most of the faculty.

But Hughes was by no means the only architect of Hamline's difficulties. The board of trustees was dominated by businessmen of moderate wealth and a handful of selected clergymen. The executive committee of the board, whose actions and recommendations were rarely questioned openly, was a small, well-entrenched group whose private interests, at times, impinged upon those of the university. Its actions led some benefactors

and board members quietly to withdraw their financial support and to resign.<sup>3</sup>

The Methodist Conference, comprised of the eastern and southern sections of the state, had its headquarters in St. Paul. The newer Northern Methodist Conference took in the rest of the state and had its headquarters in Minneapolis. The older conference contended that, by virtue of the territorial charter of 1854, it was the sole repository of the church's authority relating to Hamline University and that the Northern Conference had none. The liberal and conservative factions had feuded for several decades; Hughes cultivated the conservative clergy and arbitrarily dismissed another too-liberal professor. The central question concerning the relationship between the church and the college remained unresolved: Did the college exist to serve the church, or did the church support the college as a service to the broader community?<sup>4</sup>

The faculty, largely appointed by President Kerfoot, were highly trained professional scholars who saw themselves as purveyors of new knowledge rather than custodians of past traditions. They resented being treated as employees who could be fired arbitrarily, and equally they chafed at having their low salaries considered a form of tithing to the church. In January, 1932, they had been asked by Hughes to contribute five percent of their salaries for the balance of the year to help relieve the financial stress. They had yielded to the pressure grudgingly.<sup>5</sup>

By the spring of 1932 Hamline was faced with the critical problem of preparing a budget for 1932-33.

<sup>3</sup> On the board of trustees and the Methodist church, see Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 189-190, 198, 225, 250-258.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, *Hamline*, 80-83, 96-103. The Minnesota Methodist Conference had split in 1894 and was not reunited until 1948. The "too-liberal" professor was philosopher Gregory D. Walcott.

<sup>5</sup> Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 212-213, 243. See also James S. King, secretary of the faculty, to Hughes, Jan. 15, 1932, and "Resolution of the Special Committee of the Faculty," adopted Jan. 27, 1932, Faculty Minutes, Jan. 14, 27, 1932—both in Office of the Registrar, Hamline University, hereafter cited as OR.



ALFRED F. HUGHES, *Hamline's sixth president*

The depression had already cut into revenues from all sources, and the number of prospective students declined, a condition shared by all the private colleges in the state. There were other schools that had run up deficits and some that had administrative problems, but Hamline's version of these problems seemed all to come together at the same time, and Hughes had become the focus of discontent and distrust.<sup>6</sup>

ON MARCH 21, 1932, President Hughes called a meeting of the faculty council, composed of members of professorial rank, to inform them of the serious financial situation and the need to establish a budget. Then Hughes and Dean Milton C. Towner left the meeting, Dr. James S. King of the German department took the chair, and the council elected King, Dr. Thomas P. Beyer (English), and Dr. Clarence W. Rife (history) to confer with Hughes and "the proper committee of the Board of Trustees" on the budget for the following year. The board had recently added a phrase to its bylaws that allowed direct communication between members of the board and the faculty, bypassing the president. King withdrew from the group to make room for an economist, Dr. Charles B. Kuhlmann, when it conferred with the subcommittee on budget of the executive committee of the board.<sup>7</sup>

Two board members, Donald E. Bridgman and Raymond A. Lee, had been added to the subcommittee on the budget that was to meet with the three faculty members, Kuhlmann, Beyer, and Rife. At a meeting of

the executive committee on March 31, Hughes made a plea to "Let us forget past mistakes, let by-gones be by-gones, and go on together." But on April 2 the subcommittee and the faculty consultants submitted a budget proposal that included no salary for a president or a dean, and the executive committee passed a resolution that the university operate for the coming year without the current administration.<sup>8</sup>

On April 7, 1932, at the meeting of the board of trustees, the volcano erupted publicly. President Hughes, knowing that the actions of April 2 would be presented to the full board, gained the floor and announced his resignation. He then read a devastating 18-page, carefully documented indictment of the board and its executive committee. He charged them with financial mismanagement, administrative irregularities, and arbitrary interference with the running of the school. Asked by a member of the board if he truly intended to resign, Hughes replied "Yes" and walked out of the room.<sup>9</sup>

The resolution of the executive committee was read. The motion to accept the resignation passed, with the phrase "that he (Hughes) sever his connection with the institution forthwith." Eugene W. Randall, the president of the board, read from a letter from Hughes expressing the "opinion that it might be best to close the institution." The secretary of the board read a letter from Charles R. Richardson, president of the Alumni Association, dated April 5. The opening paragraphs expressed concern about the rumors that the university might be closed and an awareness of the financial stringencies. The college might benefit from "the elimination of expense . . . of the administrative department for a period of time." Such action, Richardson suggested, would "restore alumni confidence in the financial future of Hamline." He closed with a pledge of support.

After lunch the board appointed a committee of three trustees and one visitor from each of the two conferences to investigate Hughes's indictment, and

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<sup>6</sup> Jarchow, *Liberal Arts Colleges*, 77–82, 87, 93, 99, 129–130, describes problems faced by Augsburg, St. Olaf, Macalester, St. Thomas, and St. Mary's.

<sup>7</sup> Faculty Council, Minutes, Mar. 21, 1932, Hamline University Archives (HUA); Board of Trustees, Minutes, Dec. 11, 1931, Office of the President, Hamline University, hereafter cited as OP.

<sup>8</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, Mar. 31, April 2, 1932, OP (these minutes are interleaved chronologically with those of the board). Bridgman was a Minneapolis lawyer and son of former Hamline president George H. Bridgman; Lee was the secretary of the Minnesota State Fair Association.

<sup>9</sup> Here and two paragraphs below. see Johnson, *Hamline*, 53–55; Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 7, 1932, OP. A copy of the full indictment is in the Hughes Papers, HUA.

elected 75-year-old Dr. Henry L. Osborn as acting president. A biologist and geologist with an impressive list of publications and wide recognition in scientific circles, he had been on the faculty since 1887. He had been made a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1906. He was also a revered teacher who had served as dean and, during the illness of Kerfoot, as acting president. He was a learned and perceptive instructor in art history, a course he taught each year, and an accomplished amateur musician. Around Osborn's unassailable integrity and prestige the faculty rallied to meet the crisis.

The faculty was led by six department heads who had been selected by their colleagues. They were (with the dates of their active service on the Hamline faculty in parentheses): Drs. King (1901-51), Beyer (1906-50), Rife (1922-56), and Kuhlmann (1922-52). They were joined by Dr. George W. Muhleman (1918-41), a chemist, and Dr. Aubert C. Potorf (1925-36), a theologian well respected on the campus and well known in the pulpits around the state.<sup>10</sup>

Having confirmed the obviously prearranged reor-

<sup>10</sup> Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 229. For sketches of these men, except Potorf, see Johnson, *Hamline*, 57-60, 75-76; on Potorf, see Henry L. Osborn to alumna Marcana P. Thompson, Oct. 4, 1932, Osborn Papers, HUA.

<sup>11</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, April 12, 19, 1932, and Board of Trustees, Minutes, June 8, 1931, for the 1931-32 budget, both in OP.

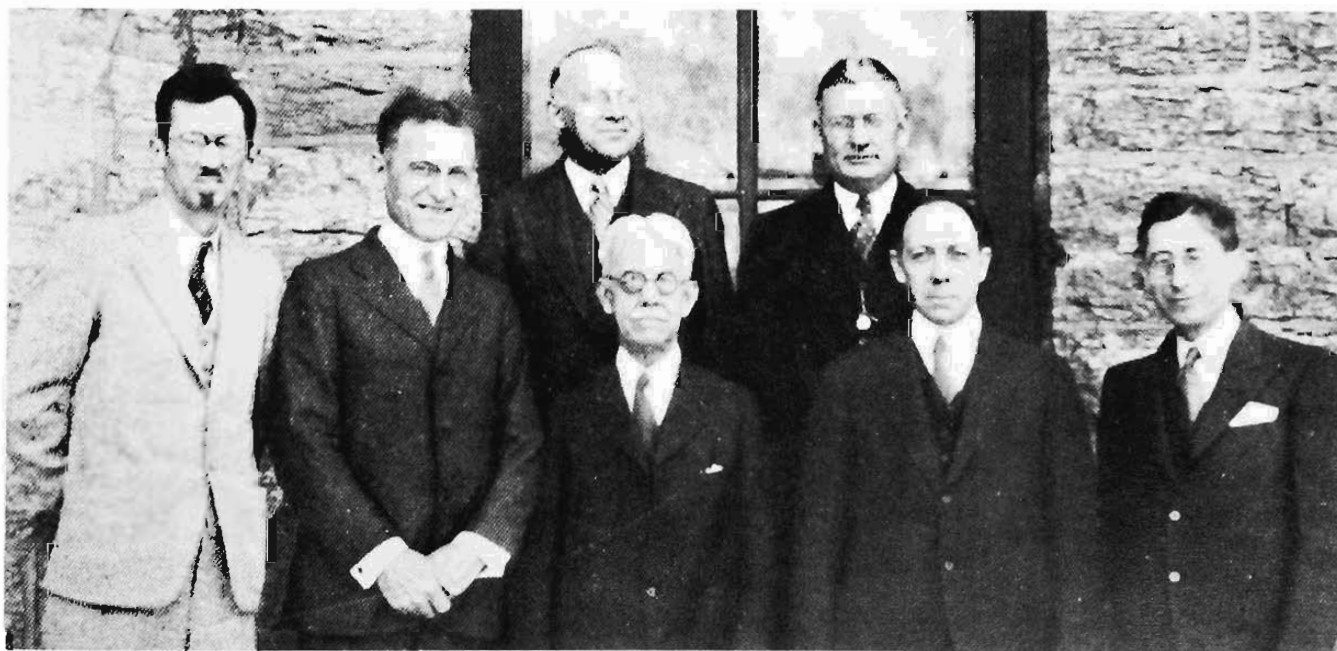
<sup>12</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, June 6, 1932, OP.

ganization of the administration, the board charged the executive committee to work on the budget in consultation with the faculty representatives. By April 19 a chillingly severe budget was proposed to the trustees on the executive committee. In summary it read:

Item	Budget (1932-33)	Reduction (from 1931-32)
Income	\$122,650	39%
Deficit to be met by gifts	\$ 21,540	47%
Expenses	\$122,650	39%
Administration	\$ 10,130	59%
Instruction (including \$71,000 in faculty salaries)	\$ 78,000	31%
		27% <sup>11</sup>

The departure of Frederick Wood, professor of mathematics, resulted in the two members of the physics department, Jens M. Rysgaard and Kent H. Bracewell, adding his courses to their teaching load. The firing of the flamboyant and highly paid choir director, Alec Simson, led to the hiring of a replacement, John M. Kuypers, at about a third the salary. With these and other savings, the salaries worked out to a smaller across-the-board cut. This proposal was approved by the full board on June 6.<sup>12</sup>

*THE FACULTY Committee of Administration: from left to right (back row), Charles B. Kuhlmann, Aubert B. Potorf; (front row) Thomas P. Beyer, George W. Muhleman, Henry L. Osborn (acting president), James S. King, and Clarence W. Rife.*



When Osborn and the faculty took over the administration of Hamline, they faced formidable problems that demanded solutions if the school were to open the following fall: the precarious financial condition marked by mounting deficits since 1924 and the falling income from all sources; the steadily declining enrollments for the previous seven years; the indifference and criticism of alumni and the Methodist clergy, both of whom had ignored their financial pledges; and finally the adverse publicity stemming from conservative religious pressures that contributed to faculty dissatisfaction and departures. To these problems was added Hughes's plan to make Hamline a junior college satellite. There were also the rumors that the university was about to close its doors. Hughes's resignation and his charges of fiscal mismanagement raised the specter of a legal attack upon the school's charter, which granted exemption from taxation on all its properties.<sup>11</sup>

The metropolitan and other newspapers in the state had given much attention to the controversies between Hughes and his critics, but neither his abrupt departure nor his charges aimed at the board received more than a few perfunctory notices. However, Hughes's criticisms were circulated within the Methodist conferences and to some extent among the alumni and academic circles. The university was faced with the difficult task of combating the rumors and the partial knowledge of the situation that spread among its major constituencies.<sup>12</sup>

AT THE ANNUAL trustees meeting on June 6, 1932, the committee appointed to investigate Hughes's charges reported that while it found no evidence of illegalities on the part of anyone, it did support most of Hughes's charges of financial mismanagement and recommended a review of the bylaws. Then Osborn gave the annual report of the president, commenting on the physical plant, the curriculum adopted the previous year, and the activities of the departments and students. He also discussed the budget reductions, noting the salary cuts and the absorption of vacated positions by existing personnel. Outlining the plans for solicitation of new students, he commented that the income from a modest increase in numbers would be offset by the reduction in tuition. Noting that the budget was based on an estimate of 350 students, he said that the goal was to enroll 400 students in September. Osborn's tone was one of hope for the future of the institution.<sup>13</sup>

After the trustees approved the faculty's nomination of Harold Scott Quigley for an honorary Doctor of Laws degree, the meeting continued with the report of the treasurer, William P. Westfall, who had borne the brunt of Hughes's criticisms. He stated that \$913,310 of the book value of the endowment (\$1,863,150) was not

producing any income; the balance of \$949,839 yielded only \$32,571.

Under Hughes, an administration committee dominated by himself, Dean Towner, and Dr. Raymond B. Nell had run the school. Nell, a professor of education, had been made dean of administration, director of placement, and registrar by Hughes. He had exercised extraordinary influence in matters of admissions and curriculum. The reorganization of the administration under Osborn was unique in that the teaching faculty assumed the major administrative duties without additional pay or reduction of teaching loads. King chaired the administration committee of Beyer, Rife, Kuhlmann, Muhleman, and Potorf. This committee recommended to the executive committee of the trustees that it be empowered to act collectively as the dean of the college and to be in charge in the absence of the acting president. The recommendation was approved. Dr. Nell retained his titles and assignments but lost all authority and influence.<sup>14</sup>

The indirect evidence, if not the official records, clearly indicates that this was the culmination of an internal coup, planned by a solidly united group of senior faculty members co-operating directly with members of the board of trustees who also opposed and distrusted Hughes. They also saw it as a way to make a large reduction in the inflated administrative costs of previous years. Well before official approval of its authority, the administration committee was aggressively tackling the problems confronting it in full cooperation with President Osborn, who assumed the public role in dealing formally with the trustees and the broader community.

WHEN Osborn accepted his appointment in April, he had briefly sketched out a plan for soliciting new students for the coming academic year. This plan was rapidly implemented, and the names of about 5,000 prospective students were garnered from alumni, Methodist churches, and the state's high schools. In particular, Hamline sought the highest-ranking stu-

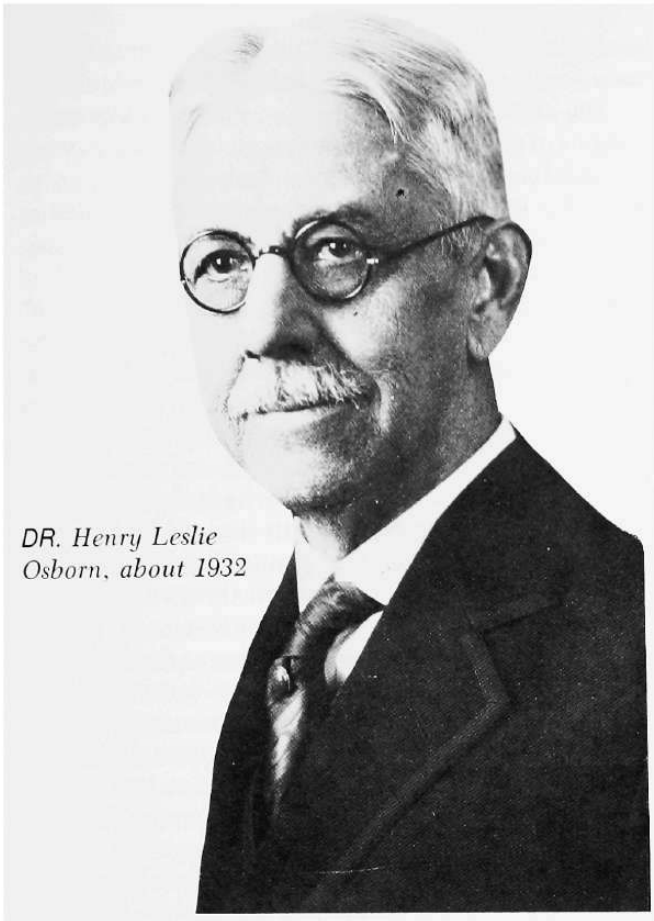
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<sup>11</sup> Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 238–239, 253–263; Johnson, *Hamline*, 92–103.

<sup>12</sup> Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 256–257. The author found little in Twin Cities or selected outstate newspapers after April 7 except a few brief notices of Hughes's and Towner's resignations; see, for example, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, April 8, 1932, p. 1. Hughes did not respond to reporters or circulate his indictment of the board publicly.

<sup>13</sup> Here and below, see Board of Trustees, Minutes, June 6, 1932, OP. Quigley was a distinguished alumnus of Hamline, its first Rhodes scholar, a political scientist of note, a former Hamline professor then teaching at the University of Minnesota. He was an outspoken critic of Hughes, especially over the firing of Dr. Walcott.

<sup>14</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, July 21, 1932, OP.



DR. Henry Leslie  
Osborn, about 1932

dents based upon grades and aptitude tests and discouraged those who held little promise. The plan made no compromises on quality for the sake of numbers.

Osborn sent all promising prospects a letter inviting them to fill out an index card indicating their academic and extracurricular interests. To those who responded there was a follow-up letter urging them to enroll and, when possible, a personal visit from a member of the faculty was arranged. Those who did not respond at first were mailed a second and then a third letter, each extolling the values of a liberal arts education and the advantages of Hamline. When the semester ended in June, 22 of the 31 full-time faculty members began canvassing the towns within 160 miles of the metropolitan area to pay personal visits to promising recruits and to contact local alumni, Methodist pastors, and school officials who might help. Joseph Hutton, the promising young basketball coach, was among them.<sup>17</sup>

All the obstacles facing the faculty—the shoestring finances, the tarnished image, the attitudes of alumni and the church, and the impact of the depression—are

<sup>17</sup> Form letter to prospective students and Osborn to Thompson, Oct. 4, 1932, Osborn Papers, HUA.

<sup>18</sup> Rife to Osborn, Aug. 23, 1932, and Osborn to Gough, Aug. 30, 1932—both in Osborn Papers, HUA.

apparent in Professor Rife's letter from St. Cloud, written on the stationery of the Grand Central Hotel, whose letterhead noted the location opposite the bus station and rates of \$1.00 up.

Dear Doctor Osborn,

A few lines from the field. "Veni, Vidi" is a safe motto to describe my accomplishments here today. With your aid I hope to add "Vici."

This city has not done much for Hamline for several years. We have only one student now, in the person of Lyle Graves. But Methodism here is making progressive strides under the able pastorate of Mr. [Harold E.] Mayo. The intellectuals are attracted to his church. Although impressed by Dr. Hughes, he is now strongly for Hamline. Among his parishioners is Supt. Gough of the local High school, a Hamline man whom you know. I have not had the pleasure of meeting Gough and I fear I cannot take time to see him on this trip. Some months ago he was incensed at Hughes' dismissal, but I gather that he is becoming well disposed.

May I suggest that you write him a letter, recalling your old association with him. Mr. Mayo assures me that he holds you in the highest regard. You might tell him how well things are going in this year of transition and how eager we are to get some students from St. Cloud. (Unfortunately some of the young people have considered that Hamline was of little account.) One of our prospects is Miss Mariann Johnson of 512 3rd. Ave South, St. Cloud, whose family came here only about a year ago and who have had little chance to know the colleges of the state. The young lady has been told by some of her chums not to go to Hamline, but her mother has an open mind. If Supt. Gough cared to say a word on Hamline's behalf it would be helpful. If he would sooner not do this directly, we should like the privilege of referring the young lady to him.

Another prospect is Miss Margaret Berglund of 338 First Ave., N. E., St. Cloud, but Miss Johnson is the more important for Gough to work upon. A third prospect is only retarded by finance.

Rev. Mr. Mayo is laying a good foundation for us and Gough could be a powerful ally.

I am in hopes enough of the Administration Committee will be on hand in a few days to enable you to call them into session to hasten the preparations for opening. I would not leave too much for the last week.

Osborn followed Rife's suggestions carefully when he wrote Superintendent Harry B. Gough, but the names of Miss Johnson and Miss Berglund did not appear on the fall roster of the school.<sup>18</sup>

Patricia Garletz, a young instructor in physical edu-



PATRICIA GARLETZ, physical education instructor

cation for women, called on the minister of the Methodist church in her home town of Preston. The pastor, a graduate of the seminary of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, promptly launched into a denunciation of the university as an "ungodly outfit which ruined students," adding that he would never send a student to Hamline. In her anger Garletz asked the minister if he had ever visited Hamline or known anyone who had attended or been associated with the school. When his reply was "No," she said firmly, "Then shut up. You have no right to talk about something about which you know nothing." On another occasion at a farm near Rochester, she was greeted at the door by a massive man who looked down at her in disbelief when she stated that she wished to talk to his son, Homer, about attending Hamline University. "What," he blurted, "was Hamline thinking in sending a mere snip of girl to talk to my son?" Looking up, the petite young woman replied, "I am a member of the

faculty and this is part of my job." The appearance of the son at that moment ended the confrontation.<sup>19</sup>

The enthusiasm and efforts to reassure all possible students of the fundamental strength of the school were also exhibited in a tale of two students who were to enter Hamline that fall. During that drouth-ridden summer, John L. Pepin and Don Walker, both Methodists who had graduated from Elk River high school in 1928, drove to the Twin Cities to examine several schools. Pepin intended to apply for admission to the Business School at the University of Minnesota but on arrival there found the dean was not in. Deciding to return later, they drove to St. Paul where Walker wanted to inquire about Hamline's preministerial program. There they met Dr. King, who had remained on the campus all summer to recruit students and to help find them jobs, housing, and financial aid if at all possible. The persuasive King enrolled them on the spot.<sup>20</sup>

FOR THE ALUMNI reassurances began immediately with Osborn's elevation to acting president. His letter to the *Alumni Monthly* sounded the themes that were to permeate the campaign to marshal renewed support for the school. He wrote of the dedication to a liberal arts education, the integrity of the faculty, and the fundamental soundness of the school despite its vicissitudes. He stressed what Hamline could offer students. This broad appeal was followed by a letter from Dr. King to all graduates reinforcing Osborn's statements. King challenged Hamline graduates, saying that "The college needs eager, capable young men and women. She wants an entering class next September of not less than two hundred new recruits. By your assistance that is easily possible. Will you, individually, not be one to select and convince one or several promising young men or women to enter Hamline University? We, here in the college, pledge our sacred word to help them discover themselves, to come into a mastery of their powers and achieve a vehicle of expression whereby they may invest that self in values which become richer with the years."<sup>21</sup>

Alumni president Richardson eagerly supported the efforts of Osborn and the faculty to enlist the aid of the alumni. The plan he presented to the executive com-

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<sup>19</sup> Taped interview with Patricia Garletz Paterson, April 17, 1987, copy in possession of the author.

<sup>20</sup> John L. Pepin, *The Education of a Country Boy* (privately published, 1980), 48, copy in HUA. Pepin returned to Hamline in 1938 as an instructor in economics and assistant in the business office; he later served as business manager until 1955 when he took the same position at Drew University, Madison, N.J.

<sup>21</sup> *Hamline University Alumni Monthly* (St. Paul), April, 1932, p. 3-4, copies in HUA.

mittee of the trustees on June 12 was for the Alumni Board to run the old president's house as a residence for men. (There was limited dormitory space for men and few inexpensive rooms in the area.) He also proposed operating a dining facility. Subsequently the plan was modified so the Alumni House held 28 men at \$25 per year. The meals were provided for \$3 a week in the basement of Manor House, a dormitory for women. The alumni and Methodist churches throughout the area supplied small amounts of money and large quantities, if little variety, of food to keep young male appetites appeased.<sup>22</sup>

In June Richardson continued his efforts among alumni with an editorial entitled "Hamline Survives." Asserting that Hamline would not close, he wrote optimistically about the fiscal reforms, the dedication to scholarship and teaching, and the spirited activities of Osborn and the faculty. He appealed to the alumni to support students with housing, food, and contributions for scholarships and financial aid. (The budget had stated explicitly that all such funds must come from gifts to the university.) Noting an initial anonymous gift of \$500, he appealed to the 3,000 alumni to raise \$10,000. He concluded, "If we will all push together now, instead of pulling in several directions, Hamline

will be riding on the top of the highest wave. Do you love the old school enough to forget all your differences and help place 500 boys and girls on this campus in September? We believe that you do." In his enthusiasm Richardson had raised the goal by 100 students.<sup>23</sup>

While Richardson exhorted the alumni, Dr. Potorf took the lead in courting the Methodist clergy. He sent a letter to each pastor in the state. It began, "You have no doubt been disturbed and aroused to wonderment by recent newspaper announcements and other statements which have come into your hands, concerning the status of Hamline University." Potorf concentrated on the function of the college and the needs of the church and the college for each other. He quoted the action of the faculty council in March that read: "RESOLVED: that this Council affirm its unswerving loyalty to the principle of maintaining Hamline University as a Christian institution." He closed with "Hamline most earnestly desires of you the same loyal interest and noble devotion which you have always shown in the past, and looks to you as the leaders of the approximately seventy thousand Methodists in this great state to rally to her support with your prayers and efforts on her behalf, that she may continue that glorious work she so courageously began over three-quarters of a century ago.

"If each of you can send us one new student every year, Hamline's future will be more than guaranteed."<sup>24</sup>

The mending of fences had begun on all fronts. When the fall term opened there were an estimated 482 students enrolled, 217 of them freshmen. The increased enrollment was proudly announced and widely circu-

<sup>22</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, June 12, 16, July 23, 1932, OP; Pepin, *Education of a Country Boy*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> *Alumni Monthly*, June, 1932, p. 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Potorf to clergy, form letter, April 25, 1932, Osborn Papers, and Faculty Council, Minutes, Mar. 21, 1932—both in HUA.

ALUMNI HOUSE at 1495  
Hewitt Avenue, St. Paul, as  
it looked in 1933





lated and the entering class was touted as the best in years on the basis of the number of valedictorians, salutatorians, and overall grade averages and scores on aptitude tests.<sup>25</sup>

WITH this great psychological lift, the faculty plunged into the work of teaching. Their efforts seemed to be further rewarded by renewed church support. The new bishop of both the Minnesota Conference and the Northern Minnesota Conference, J. Ralph Magee, was an impressive man who took an active interest in the school through his ex-officio presence on the board of trustees. The Minnesota Conference held its annual meeting at Hamline, September 20–25. Osborn wrote to an alumna in California that this was “a most fortunate fact for us, and our faculty members attended many of the meetings and we were able to conduct a Matriculation chapel wearing their academic costumes, and the a cappella choir singing a beautiful anthem . . . gave a great deal of pleasure to everybody.”<sup>26</sup>

The superintendent of the St. Paul District, Albert J. Northrup, reported, “In the face of most disheartening disturbances Hamline University just now thrills us with the most remarkable achievement in student enrollment.” Noting the lack of a president and adequate funds, he said that “The spirit of Hamline is not dead, nor are our people incapable of response. This Conference must be allowed a voice in Hamline affairs, and we must accept our share of financial responsibility in making Hamline University more than ever our Christian College.” The report of the Board of Education, a standing committee of the conference, commended the faculty for the increased enrollment.

When the Northern Conference met in Park Rapids September 28 to October 2, Potorf, Beyer, Muhleman, Rife, and Hays P. Archerd, associate professor of classical languages and a former missionary, attended and were well received. The report on Hamline by the Board of Education stressed the need for a president, praised the work of the faculty and alumni in increasing the enrollment, and recommended collecting \$.25 per member for the support of the school, aiming for a total of \$6,000. This recommendation was the hoped-for goal of the supporters of Hamline within the Methodist church in Minnesota through contributions by each parish to the World Service Fund, the general philanthropic fund of the church. In addition, through the efforts of the dean of women, Mary B. Housel, the women’s circles of the individual churches were encouraged to hold teas where a “silver offering” would be taken to help needy, deserving young women.<sup>27</sup>

The campus came alive in September with the returning students and a feisty freshman class that was

determined to make its presence felt in the extracurricular activities. The yearbook featured 54 teams, activities, and organizations that vied for attention. A straw vote taken by the *Hamline Oracle* revealed the political tenor of the campus during the 1932 campaign: for president, Herbert C. Hoover 215, Norman M. Thomas 101, Franklin D. Roosevelt 46; for governor, Earle Brown, Republican, 233, Floyd B. Olson, Farmer-Labor, 97.<sup>28</sup>

John Kuypers led the choir on a tour in southern Minnesota supported by the contributions of the audiences. The makeshift theater in the Science Building was the scene of excellent productions directed by Anne Simley with marvels of ingenuity in costumes, scenery, and lighting produced on a minuscule budget. Joe Hutton’s basketball squad expected to repeat its championship. Debate flourished. Forty students in the Oxford Fellowship contemplated careers in the church. The *Oracle* approved of the new dean of men, Charles S. Templer, head of the speech department, and the retention of Mary Housel as dean of women. It reported an enrollment of 453 students and extolled the quality of the 184 freshmen. The paper also noted that Hughes was now pastor of the Methodist church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and printed a brief article by Thomas Beyer on the new administration.<sup>29</sup>

A more complete article appeared later that fall. The alumni editor explained that “Sensing the unusual happy atmosphere surrounding the campus, and the student body, the editor has asked Dr. King if he would prepare an article on the type of work carried on by the administration committee of Hamline.” King admitted that the system was imperfect but “can be made to serve during an interregnum period.” The main weakness was the lack of a “man in the field,” a permanent president. Comparing the new organization to a presi-

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<sup>25</sup> Osborn’s official report, Board of Trustees, Minutes, Nov. 29, 1932, OP.

<sup>26</sup> Here and below, see *Minutes of the Seventy-Eighth (1932) Sessions of the Minnesota Conference* (Waseca: n.p., 1932), 38, 47, in United Methodist Church Archives (UMCA), Minneapolis; Osborn to Thompson, Oct. 4, 1932, Osborn Papers, HUA.

<sup>27</sup> *Hamline Oracle* (student weekly), Sept. 30, 1932, p. 1, copies in HUA and MHS; *Official Journal of the Thirty-Eighth (1932) Session of the Northern Minnesota Conference* (Herman: The Conference, 1932), 45, copy in UMCA. A collection of women’s circles notebooks are in HUA.

<sup>28</sup> Pepin, *Education of a Country Boy*, 53; *Liner 1933* (Hamline yearbook), 36–94, HUA; *Oracle*, Nov. 11, 1932, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Liner 1933*, 57, 72–73, 76, 82–85; *Oracle*, Sept. 23, 1932, p. 1–2. Anne Simley to the author, July 25, 1987, a 12-page reply to questions and a chronological account of the events of 1932–33. On student life and activities during the period, see Nute, *Hamline Halls*, 269–279.



MANOR HOUSE, women's dormitory, in 1925

dent and his cabinet, or a mayor and his commissioners, he wrote that the committee served Osborn as an executive council.<sup>30</sup>

"All the activities of the college . . . are grouped in six grand divisions," King wrote, "determined by the number of members on the Committee. . . . In each instance the experience, temperament and inclinations of the members determine to a large degree the type of activities allocated to him. . . . the President is in touch with all parts of the college body by means of these six ramifying nerve trunks. On the assumption that a person does best the things he has aptitude for and interest in there is substantial ground for expecting happy results from this venture."

King noted that each member reported individually to the president on matters under his wing, and the full committee acted as a "clearing house," affording "a happy instance of unity in diversity, one body, six members, each member cojoined and integrated with all the others in a common undertaking." He stated that with the other members of the staff and the "well manned and functioning faculty committees," things were running well.

A study of those "well manned and functioning"

<sup>30</sup> Here and two paragraphs below, see *Alumni Monthly*, Oct./Nov., 1932, p. 11-13.

<sup>31</sup> *Hamline University Bulletin* (catalog number), April, 1933, p. 2, 11, OR; Paterson interview, April 17, 1987; Simley to author, July 25, 1987; interview with Dr. Walter A. Kenyon, April 13, 1987. Kenyon replaced Osborn as head of the biology department.

<sup>32</sup> *Hamline University Bulletin* (announcements), July, 1932, p. 9-16, OR; Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, Sept. 23, Oct. 20, 1932, OP.

<sup>33</sup> Here and below, see Pepin, *Education of a Country Boy*, 52-53; Paterson and Kenyon interviews; Simley to author, July 25, 1987; conversations of the author with alumni at reunions in 1985, 1986, and 1987.

faculty groups reveals that there were 19 committees with 87 individual assignments. The administration committee was indeed in control and in touch; its six members held 32 of the assignments (36 percent) and in most cases chaired other committees as well. The other six full professors filled 25 assignments, so the ranking members of the faculty held 65 percent. The other 19 full-time teachers filled 30 positions. But this weight at the top did not seem to impede the flow of ideas or dampen the enthusiasm of those lower in rank. There was a pervasive sense of camaraderie born of commitment, hope, and the battle for survival.

The faculty minutes for the year recorded decisions reached, but not the debates enlivening them. However, a participant in those meetings recalls Dr. Osborn presiding in benign dignity, letting the faculty talk, or shout, at length, especially two members who could not tolerate one another. The administration committee had the personalities and political skills to handle any situation. When they were unanimous they could not be swayed, but when they were divided the rest of the faculty could often tip the scales.<sup>31</sup>

Of course the main task of the faculty was teaching. The faculty-student ratio was approximately 15 to 1 and the course load was 12 to 15 hours a week, or more. The teachers were spread thinly over their fields, and the offerings were limited. Nine departments had only one instructor, five had only two, and two of these covered two fields. English, including introductory writing, was taught by three full-time and three part-time instructors. Courses in physical education for both men and women were covered by four persons, including those with major coaching assignments. Increased enrollments forced the budget to yield. The laboratory instructor in chemistry was restored to a full-time position, and Patricia Garletz's salary rose from \$1,000 to \$1,200 as her teaching load rose to 20 hours a week.<sup>32</sup>

The faculty and students were bound together by burdens borne and sacrifices made in getting and providing an education. Many a student's sparse funds were supplemented by a meal at a faculty home, or the cost of a book, carfare, or a coke date from faculty pockets. Garletz and the school nurse revived one student who fainted because he had not eaten for three days: the bank moratorium of 1932 had prevented him from cashing a check. His advisor, Arthur S. Williamson of the history department, was called. He took the young man to his apartment for a full meal.<sup>33</sup>

The bonds formed in the classrooms and through extracurricular activities extended into the social life of the campus. Dances were shoestring affairs; a band cost five dollars, and the decorations, favors, and refreshments were either scrounged or contributed. Faculty members were welcomed, having assisted in various ways to make these events possible. At the Hamline

Theater on University near Snelling Avenue, where one sat with one's feet raised to avoid the mice scampering across the floor, there was a section tacitly reserved for Hamline students and faculty.

While students were vaguely aware of the financial crisis facing the school, the faculty knew much depended on the board of trustees. In December Westfall, the treasurer, resigned but remained on the board awaiting a replacement for the treasurership. A committee was appointed to select his successor, and an auditor was brought in to balance the books and recommend changes. He reported that he had never encountered a more muddled situation and urged that the offices of the treasurer and business secretary be merged on the campus. At this same time a first effort to obtain a new president began with the appointment of a screening committee under the Reverend John E. Bowes, chairman, and Raymond Lee, secretary. (Other board members were Bishop Magee, Bridgman, and Westfall.) A committee of Rife, Beyer, and Kuhlmann from the faculty and Richardson representing the alumni was formed to advise them.<sup>34</sup>

THE DEPRESSION hit bottom that winter. Endowment income fell, gifts were few and small, and the Methodist conferences were still internally divided about support for the school. Osborn's earlier optimism had faded. To a correspondent in Tokyo, Japan, he wrote, "we are 'between the devil and the deep sea' most of the time. I leave it to you to assign which is which. . . . We had thought that Hamline affairs were prospering auspiciously during the summer and early autumn, but later on thunder clouds began to show up on the horizon and our clerical friends do menace the present arrangement so that we are uncertain what will overtake us during the rest of the year. However, we hope for the best." The faculty also felt that the liberal arts tradition of the school was still seriously threatened by factions within the church that would see in the plight of the university an opportunity to impose sectarian restrictions on teaching jobs and curriculum.<sup>35</sup>

Tuition payments for the first semester were \$9,000 in arrears, and no endowment funds could be used for current expenses. There was not enough cash on hand to pay the bills and salaries. In January, 1933, the faculty was told that salaries would be cut an additional 25 percent, retroactive to the first of the month, and that there was no guarantee they would be paid at all, nor when the funds would be available. The faculty met on Saturday, January 14, to discuss the action taken by the trustees. Osborn attributed the situation to the loss of income from endowment. Beyer, Rife, and Kuhlmann were elected to communicate to the executive committee of the board the faculty's reaction to the cuts and to request that trustees meet with the adminis-

tration committee "in order that the faculty may be more clearly informed as to the financial condition of the college in relation to faculty salaries." That night Dr. Walter A. Kenyon, professor of biology, was heard to say despairingly to his wife, "I'm not sure we're going to make it."<sup>36</sup>

The executive committee met with Osborn and his committee on January 20. Representing the trustees were Westfall, Bridgman, Lee, and the Reverend Frank A. Cone. Kuhlmann, speaking for the faculty, raised three central questions: Was such a large cut necessary? Was it not unfortunate to begin the cut with the January salaries when no notice had been given? Was it possible to make salary payments at the first of the month or at least notify faculty of time and amount of payments? The arrears on tuition payments, now \$8,000, and a projected deficit of \$44,000 were noted by the Executive Committee. All payments would depend upon future income from various sources. From existing cash reserves \$3,500 was made available for salaries and the faculty was authorized to confer with the business secretary as to when and what payments would be possible.<sup>37</sup>

There was no alternative for the faculty members but to keep themselves and the school going as best they could. There were no other teaching jobs, unemployment was rising, and the relief measures of the New Deal were not yet in existence. "We learned frugality," wrote Anne Simley, in both departmental and personal budgets. The faculty accepted the reductions in salary rather than suffer staff reductions and the loss of jobs. Paychecks for the balance of the school year were partial and sporadic with a net reduction of about 50 percent from the previous year.<sup>38</sup>

The university also learned frugality. Two cars were sold; a farm valued at \$5,000 was sold for \$3,500, with a \$50 down payment; the wages of the staff were also cut, and expenditures closely watched. But just as the faculty maintained its academic standards, so too did the business office draw limits. For example, it did not foreclose a mortgage on a farm because the owner was an alumna with a large family and because such foreclosures aroused rural protests. It rejected bids for the use of Norton Field for Sunday baseball and a rodeo and honored the claims of Hughes and Towner for their salaries. Despite all belt tightening, it was decreed that

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<sup>34</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, Dec. 15, 1932, OP.

<sup>35</sup> Osborn to Helen Morris Lee, Dec. 29, 1932, Osborn Papers; Paterson interview; Simley to author, July 25, 1987.

<sup>36</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, Jan. 12, 1933, OP; Faculty Minutes, Jan. 14, 1933, OR; Paterson interview.

<sup>37</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, Jan. 20, 1933, OP.

<sup>38</sup> Paterson and Kenyon interviews; Simley to author, July 25, 1987.

the fiscal year 1932–33 would end June 1 and that the following fiscal year would begin on September 1. This meant there would be no salaries for the summer months. Any late tuition payments, however, for the year would apply to any salaries in arrears.<sup>39</sup>

Financial woes carried other consequences. In April the North Central Association of Colleges (NCAC) withdrew Hamline's accreditation. The reviewers praised the academic program and the faculty but found the finances and the administration not acceptable and questioned the athletic program's possible violations of the recruiting rules. Kuhlmann reported the action of the NCAC to the faculty and to the board; he and two trustees were appointed to appeal the decision. The NCAC replied that no action could be taken for a full year. But Beyer and Kuhlmann met with president Lotus D. Coffman of the University of Minnesota, who reassured them that the action would not alter the acceptance of Hamline credits.<sup>40</sup>

In late April the proposed budget for 1933–34 was cut \$16,500 below that for 1932–33 with the allocation for instruction including salaries reduced by \$7,645. The figures were followed by this statement: "There is no guarantee of salaries for the fiscal year 1933–34. The University will make available for current expenses a total of \$35,000 out of net income from endowment and gifts for current expenses. If the cash income available for current expenses, after including such \$35,000 is less than current expenses, the Trustees or the Executive Committee may call on the faculty to help meet the deficit by reduction of salaries, to the extent necessary to balance cash income and expenses." The budget also stated that the faculty would be expected to assist in administrative work, student recruiting, publicity, and to teach courses not in their fields. Still, Osborn gave a positive report at the annual meeting on June 5, citing the successful school year in academic and extracurricular matters and lauding the morale of the faculty and the student body under trying circumstances.<sup>41</sup>

THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK and the blow from the NCAC prodded the trustees into action. A new president had to be found. The student newspaper editorialized on that clear need but wistfully concluded, "when

we do get one, let us remember that he is not absolutely necessary. With the right kind of a faculty, and the right kind of an alumni body, we have been able to get along without any supreme executive power. Let us always remember when Hamline University was a democracy."<sup>42</sup>

Very shortly Raymond Lee, secretary of the search committee, announced that a list of 43 candidates had been cut to six and a choice would be made soon. On May 25, the *Oracle* headlined a story that a president would be announced the next week and quoted Lee as saying that among the candidates were Phi Beta Kappa, a Rhodes scholar, and college executives. At least two candidates visited the campus. But the board had neither resolved its internal situation nor changed its officers, and the problem of the treasurer and the financial offices remained unsolved. The trustees turned to the church for leadership, to men who had a vested interest in Hamline but who were not dependent upon it for their careers or their security.

On June 27 the search committee reported to the board that the loss of accreditation was causing difficulty in soliciting students because of the "publicity given to our plight by zealous representatives of other colleges." The committee then nominated as president Bishop J. Ralph Magee whose response was an ultimatum. He spoke of the "alarming emergency" and his duties as bishop, then stated, "Before I could accept there are some matters upon which we must agree." He listed seven critical points: the securing of a permanent president; the appointment of a dean from the faculty; consent from the board and faculty to balance the budget at once and to cease the sale of securities; consent of the board to reorganize the administration to satisfy the NCAC; consent from the board, the faculty, and the Alumni Board to an organized effort to secure additional income; that changes be made on the board of trustees without their being taken personally; and finally, that the bylaws be amended so that all dealings between trustees and faculty go through the president. And he promised "to seek the wisest counsel . . . and shall keep all parties . . . fully informed of progress or failure." The conditions were accepted and the nomination approved.<sup>43</sup>

The changes came swiftly. King was named dean and Kuhlmann became assistant to the president. Several members of the board submitted their resignations. New officers were elected. John Bowes, a minister from the Minnesota Conference, was elected treasurer and that office and the business secretary were combined on the campus. The budget approved in May for 1933–34 was slashed an additional \$26,335, with the instructional funds cut by \$13,300 to \$56,412. Even so it contained an anticipated \$11,000 deficit. Again, the faculty rose to the challenge and successfully

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<sup>39</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, Aug. 18, Sept. 23, Oct. 20, 1932, Feb. 16, May 25, July 13, 1933, and Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 27, 1933—both in OP.

<sup>40</sup> Faculty Minutes, April 24, 1933, OR; Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 27, 1933, OP. Hutton had recruited students as did the rest of the faculty but he was not specifically recruiting athletes.

<sup>41</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 27, 1933, OP.

<sup>42</sup> Here and below, see *Oracle*, Mar. 24, p. 2, April 7, p. 1, May 25, p. 1, 1933.

<sup>43</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, June 27, 1933, OP.

repeated its earlier student solicitation program.<sup>44</sup>

Magee, who retained his position as bishop, appealed to the church in his new capacity as president. He wrote, "Hamline's woes have been paraded and magnified. Her glorious history and services have been forgotten by too many people." He reviewed the North Central Association's praise of the academic program and assured his readers that the administrative weaknesses were being corrected. He asked each parish to collect money at a "Hamline Sunday" and in closing wrote, "Take one [offering] soon, please, and send it in early. We have no income in the summer months."<sup>45</sup>

Donald E. Bridgman addressed the annual alumni banquet in a frank report that stressed the fact that the crisis had been surmounted. He gave much of the credit to the faculty. Bishop Magee's message was shorter but much the same, coupled with a plea for \$100 from each alumnus. There was a feeling on the faculty that a corner had been turned, that survival and renewal were possible. It stemmed from Bishop Magee's strong leadership and the fact that they themselves had sustained the greatest sacrifices and had contributed the critical vigor and leadership in the interregnum between presidents.<sup>46</sup>

THE FALL of 1933 opened with increased enrollment, over 500 for the first time in nearly a decade. The report of the St. Paul District Superintendent to the Minnesota Conference stated, "After a period of confusion and uncertainty our Methodist University evidently is now ready to go forward. The largest single factor is the entrance of Bishop Magee into the sphere of immediate responsibility. But very much credit is due to the heroic services of our splendid faculty." The report of the church's board of education praised the election of the bishop and backed his appeal for \$100 per day from the church for the academic year. So too did the report of the Northern Methodist Conference's board of education.<sup>47</sup>

By the following spring the NCAC restored accreditation on a probationary basis and a year later removed probation without review. The trustees were encouraged. But the search for a president still lagged. The few weeks or months that Bishop Magee had hoped would be his tenure stretched to a full year. When the trustees met on September 6, 1934, at 4:00 P.M. the search committee reported that it had no candidates to recommend and suggested that the committee be replaced or new members added. Dr. Charles N. Pace, a trustee, a former pastor of the Methodist church in Duluth, and now superintendent of the Minneapolis District, was nominated from the floor. Three trustees were appointed to talk to Dr. Pace. A recess was called. The three returned to announce that Pace would accept, and by 5:00 P.M. Hamline had a permanent presi-

dent after two and a half years without one. His first statement to the faculty was that "Your job is to be masters of the subjects for which you are responsible and I shall assume that you are and not interfere unless you prove otherwise. My job is to raise the money to support this school and to pay your salaries." The applause was heartfelt. He won the support even of those who had skeptically said, "Not another minister!"<sup>48</sup>

There were still lean years ahead, but Pace, the last minister to be the president, fulfilled his promise. He attracted new benefactors to replace those lost and repaired the shattered economic foundations. The faculty was renewed and enlarged. But what remained from that year when the faculty ran the school and kept it from collapsing were the shared commitments and sacrifices they had made and the confidence in their ability to have done so well. Twenty of the 31 full-time faculty in 1932-33 finished their teaching careers at Hamline. When this author joined the Hamline faculty in 1950, there was a palpable ethos among the older members who had served in that critical year, an unspoken bond that transcended their diversities and differences. It was not often articulated. It was not exclusionary. It simply existed.

In the late 1940s at a meeting of the Athletic Policies Committee, the recently elected president, Hurst Anderson, mused, "I've always wondered why Joe Hutton [the renowned basketball coach] stayed here when he could have had any job he wanted in the country." Dr. Kent Bracewell, chairman of the committee and head of the department of mathematics and physics, paused, sat erectly in his chair, and replied, "Well, Mr. President, we thought that this institution was worth saving and worth working for though we didn't get much for it. Besides, we would have considered ourselves traitors if we had left it."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Trustees Executive Committee, Minutes, July 13, 1933, and Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 27, Sept. 14, 1933—both in OP.

<sup>45</sup> Magee to clergy, June 29, 1933. Osborn Papers.

<sup>46</sup> *Hamline Alumnus* (formerly *Alumni Monthly*), Summer, 1933, p. 1, 35; Paterson interview; Simley to author, July 25, 1987.

<sup>47</sup> *Minutes of the Seventy-Ninth (1933) Session of the Minnesota Conference* (Rochester: The Conference, 1933), 137, 144-145, and *Official Journal of the Thirty-Eighth (1933) Session of the Northern Minnesota Conference* (Herman: n.p., 1933), 166—both in UMCA.

<sup>48</sup> Board of Trustees, Minutes, Sept. 6, 1934; Charles Nelson Pace, "Hamline," 1, a private memoir about his tenure written after his 1948 retirement, Pace Papers, HUA; Paterson interview.

<sup>49</sup> Paterson interview.

THE PICTURE on p. 113 is from *Liner 1933*, p. 35; all other illustrations are from the MHS audio-visual library.



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