

Watson Kirkconnell
1895-1977

Watson Kirkconnell, scholar, teacher, publicist, poet and translator, died this February in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Born in Port Hope, Ontario, he received his university education at Queen's University in the nearby city of Kingston, and at Oxford University. Professor Kirkconnell's teaching career began in Winnipeg's Wesley College where, between 1934 and 1940, he was the chairman of the Department of Classics. From 1940 to 1948 he served as chairman of the Department of English at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. From 1948 to 1964 Professor Kirkconnell was President of Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. During his academic career he also served as national secretary, chairman and president of several learned societies and institutions, including the Canadian Authors' Association and the Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Throughout much of his life Kirkconnell had been involved in civic affairs. During the turbulent 1930's and 1940's he fought against the new totalitarian ideologies, especially communism. He was also a devoted and effective spokesman for Canada's European immigrant ethnic minorities.

Kirkconnell had a special interest in Hungarian culture both in Hungary and in Canada. His love for Magyar poetry resulted in several volumes of verse translation, the most notable being the *Magyar Muse* (1933), and the monumental but, alas, still unpublished *Hungarian Helicon* (1,180 pages in manuscript).

His devotion to things Hungarian involved Kirkconnell in the work of the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* first as a contributor and, from 1975 to his death, as one of the journal's mentors and its Honorary Editor.

Watson Kirkconnell, O.C. (1968), M.A., Ph.D., D.ès L., D. Litt., L.H.D., D.P.Ec., LL.D., F.R.S.C., prided himself with having won numerous highly coveted academic and literary honours; with competence in several, diverse disciplines; with familiarity with some fifty languages; and with a list of publications almost unmatched in length and scope. With his passing our journal has lost a devoted adviser and

friend; Hungarian-Canadians, a loyal and effective spokesman; and the world of learning, a scholar of extraordinary achievements and range of interests.

In a forthcoming issue our journal will pay a special tribute to this remarkable man.

(NFD)