

San Germán and the Polytechnic Institute Welcome Dr. and Mrs. J. Will Harris

Fundador del Instituto Se Encuentra en P. R.

Desde hace una semana, procedente de su residencia en Texas, y acompañado de su esposa, se encuentra en la isla el Dr. J. Will Harris, fundador en 1912 de nuestro Instituto Politécnico.

Poco después de su llegada, los señores Harris se trasladaron al Instituto, en San Germán, donde son huéspedes de honor, y en donde ellos tienen puestos sus amores como la obra que les debe su vida y que hoy se les ofrece esplendorosa en un grado de desarrollo que solo el corazón y la imaginación enfervorizados de sus fundadores pudieron sospechar.

El Politécnico y la ciudad de San Germán han rivalizado en actos de profundo reconocimiento y de cordial admiración y afecto.

El día de su llegada, les fué ofrecida una recepción en la llamada Casa María, mansión de belleza sin igual, construída por el Capitán Heylman y donada al Politécnico para residencia de sus presidentes. El Dr. Seel, actual presidente del Instituto, y su gentil esposa, obsequiaron a los fundadores, a los miembros de la Facultad y de la Administración, y a las más destacadas personas de la localidad, con una cena espléndida, en las terrazas que dominan uno de los paisajes más sorprendentemente bellos de la isla. La masa coral del Politécnico cantó un programa que fué calurosamente aplaudido.

Los Harris agasajados

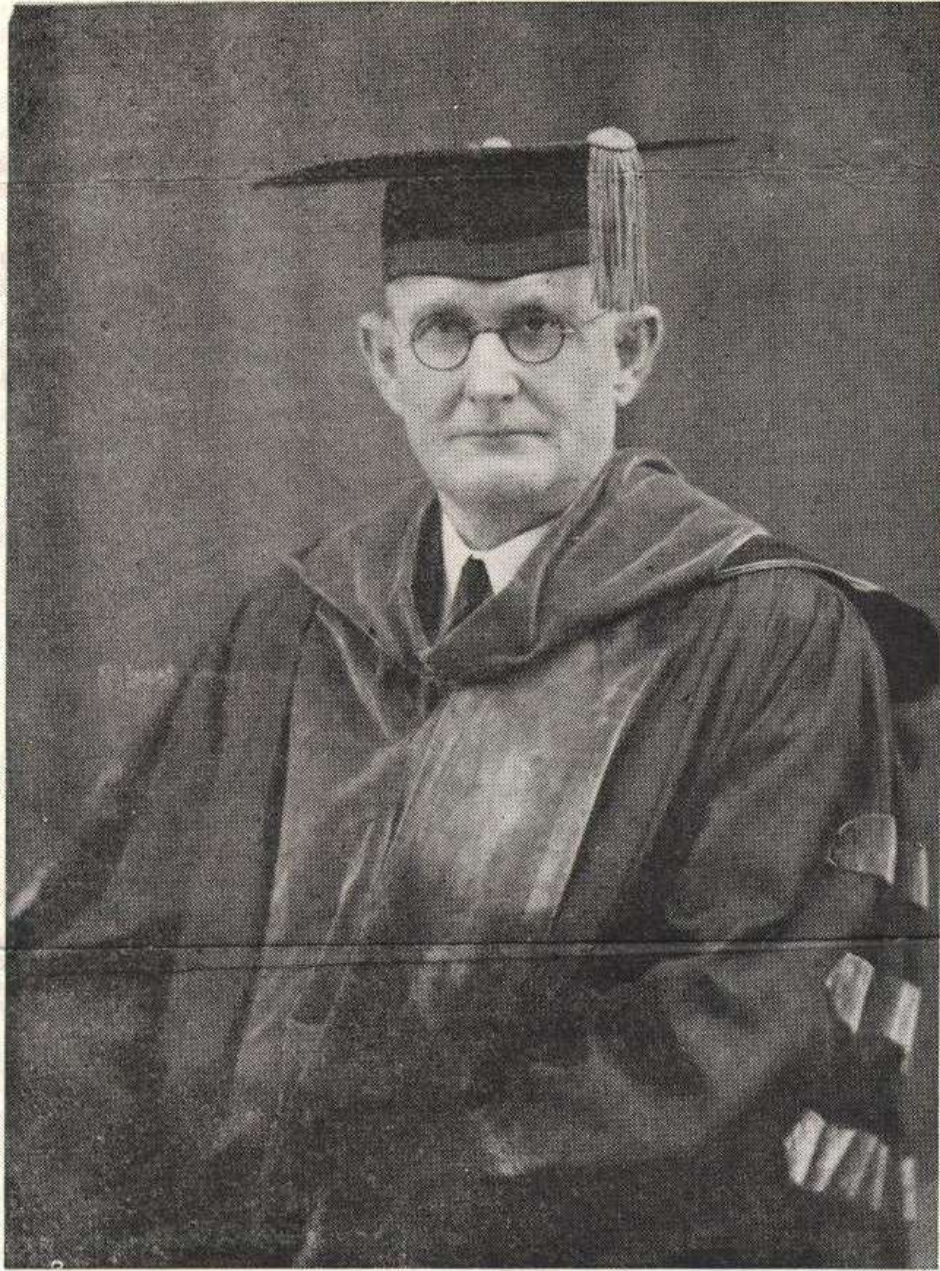
En días sucesivos una serie ininterrumpida de agasajos demostraron a los señores Harris cuan hondas y sinceras son las raíces que dejaron su apostólica y útil labor, de tantos años en esta comarca. El Club de Leones y el de Rotarios les ofrecieron sendas comidas extraordinariamente concurridas. Los esposos Gregory, Palmer, Vélez, Herman Alvarez, Leker y la Sra. Esperanza Castillo, tuvieron el privilegio de sentarlos a su mesa entre las innumerables familias que hubieran querido tener esa satisfacción si lo hubiera permitido una permanencia más larga de los visitantes.

Entre los homenajes organizados por el Municipio y las entidades culturales y religiosas de la ciudad merecen destacarse la recepción en la Alcaldía de San Germán, que previamente había nombrado a Dr. Harris hijo adoptivo de la ciudad: la dedicación de la Avenida J. W. Harris, que enlaza el recinto del Politécnico con la ciudad, de tan evocador estilo colonial; los servicios de bienvenida en la Iglesia presbiteriana con sermón a cargo del propio Dr. Harris, y el acto de afecto y simpatía organizados

(Continúa al dorso)

conjuntamente por la Logia Masónica "Luz de las Lomas" y el Capítulo de la Orden Estrella de Oriente "Esperanza" No. 3.

Los actos organizados por el Politécnico aparte la recepción en Casa María, fueron el banquete ofrecido en el suntuoso comedor del Colegio, con asistencia de los ex-alumnos, la Facultad y las personalidades invitadas; y el acto de graduación de la Clase de 1948. Este acto en que culminó el programa en honor de los fundadores tuvo el bosque del Politécnico en una manera radiante de luz y paisaje, hasta llegar a la escalera histórica", del primitivo edificio del Instituto; el discurso de graduación a cargo del Dr. Fernando Sainz, escuchado con un recogimiento y emoción impresionantes; y el momento de imponer al Dr. Harris las insignias honoríficas que los concurrentes presenciaron de pie y en medio de una cariñosa e interminable ovación.



Dr. J. Will Harris.

I shall read you first what Who's Who in America says of Will Harris and then what those say who know him best.

"Harris, John William, educator; b. Dripping Springs, Tex., Jan. 12, 1876; B.A., Park Coll., Parkville, Mo., 1902, LL. D., 1920; grad. Princeton Theol. Sem. 1905; m. Eunice Evelyn White, of Hiawatha, Kan., May 17, 1905; children— Helen Evelyn, William Donald, Margaret Alice, Robert White, Charles Cleland. Ordained Presbyn. ministry, 1905; went to Puerto Rico as missionary 1906; founder, 1912, and pres. Poly. Inst. of Puerto Rico, the only successful industrial co-educational coll. of liberal arts in Latin America; retired as pres. of sch. on Founder's Day, Mar. 2, 1937. County committeeman Agri. Adjustment Administrn. Mason. Home: El Guajalote Ranch, Dilley, Tex."

A man who saw visions and dreamed dreams and set out to make them come true; who built a great college on nothing but faith and hard work; an unremitting toiler in the vineyard of the Lord; the man who has done more for the spirit and lasting good of Puerto Rico than any other person who has sojourned among us; the man who with the help of his devoted and beloved wife has built the most lasting edifice it is given to man to build, a shrine in the hearts and consciences of men and women.

"And all the elements in him so mixed, that Nature might at last stand up and say: THIS IS A MAN."

It is most fitting that here on these old steps where Will Harris over 35 years ago made the modest start of this great institution, the Institute now honors him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity and he honors the Polytechnic Institute by accepting it.

Dr. James Beverley.

Calle San Juan Renamed Avenida Dr. Harris

Late Thursday afternoon on May 6 members of the Rotary Club, faculty of the Polytechnic, public officials from the town and friends gathered at the little park east of the Steps to dedicate the new thoroughfare which has always been popularly known as Calle San Juan but henceforth is to be called Avenida Dr. Harris.

Dr. Joachim A. Abudo, president of the Rotary briefly reviewed the efforts made by the Rotary to bring about the improvement of the street mentioning as he did so the interest of Mr. Earl E. Clarke in this particular project.

Lcdo. José Martín Betancourt, chairman of the Municipal Council, stated that it had been a pleasure for the municipality to undertake and complete the project sponsored by the Rotary. He deeply regretted the fact that the plaque designating the new name of the street was not ready for installation.

On behalf of the Polytechnic Dr. Seel thanked both the Rotary and the Municipal Council for what they had done and added his hope that the new thoroughfare could bind the college and the town still more closely to each other.

Dr. Abudo then called upon Dr. Harris who after expressing his appreciation for the honor conferred upon him recalled the appearance of the street during his first years at the Poly. In those days, he said, the street was so narrow that the windows and doors of the little houses on either side of the street opened out onto the road. Deep ruts lined the road and in rainy weather the ex-carts sunk to the hub in the mud. He closed by expressing the hope that some day new and more attractive homes in another part of the city would be provided for the citizens who now lived on either side of the avenida.

Senator Santiago R. Palmer brought the ceremonies to a close by heartily concurring with Dr. Harris suggestion and added that he too hoped to see the day when this new project could be carried out to completion.

Institute Graduates Honor the HARRISES

On Friday evening May 6 members of the Polytechnic alumni, faculty and senior class gathered in the new comedor to do honor to Dr. and Mrs. J. Will Harris—founders of this institution.

As toastmaster of the evening, Mr. Juan Faría, jovial president of the alumni association, welcomed everyone and paid gracious tribute to the vision, love and labors of the founders. During the course of the evening he called upon Dr. Seel, Dr. Rodríguez Quiñones of Arecibo and Mr. Carlos Valls, president of the senior class, to speak. Each of these gentlemen attested in words of sincere appreciation to the magnificent work done by Dr. and Mrs. Harris.

During the course of the evening Mrs. Lydia Gregory pinned a superb corsage of orchids on Mrs. Harris and Miss Esther Delgado on behalf of the alumni presented to the HARRISES a generous check. A number of congratulatory telegrams and messages were received and read aloud.

Mrs. Harris rose first to express her love for the school, its faculty and alumni and her deep appreciation for everything that had been done to make their current visit to Puerto Rico such a happy one. She closed by assuring everyone present of the warm welcome awaiting them at Dilly, Texas.

Dr. Harris also expressed his deep gratitude and affection for the school and its alumni. He then related something of his early struggles to keep the school going and growing and called upon everyone present to help the Poly to keep on going and growing especially in the field of helping deserving but needy students.

He closed by stating that his heart would always be with the Polytechnic for he had given directions that at his death his heart should be brought back to San Germán and buried beside the Steps.