Garry and Sandy—In Appreciation

Rarely does any one month take from the Rutgers family two men of the stature of William P. Garrison ‘10 and Alexander Stuart Graham, who died in December. Although it is some years since either was in active work for the University, the mark of their individual contributions to its growth and influence stands clear.

Garry was known to hundreds of Rutgers men, and none knew him but to admire and respect his ability and his integrity. In 1920 he came from the business world to Rutgers as graduate manager of athletics. In 1921 he added to that the work of alumni secretary. A man of more limited capacity and less vision would have broken under the strain of two such demanding jobs. But Garry had a genius for organization and a sense of proportion. He was building for the future.

He used to say that an alumni secretary was a combination of business man and educator, and whether a man stayed with the job or not depended upon which was dominant in him. In Garry the business man was the stronger, and so when he felt that firm foundations had been laid in each organization, he picked the best man he could find to succeed him—Arthur Busch as alumni secretary and Harry Rockafeller as graduate manager—and returned to the business world.

Garry could have been an alumni trustee. In the days when there were two candidates nominated each year, Garry was chosen to run in an election shortly after he had left the University. His opponent was a much older man, a warm personal friend and fraternity brother whom he knew he would hurt by defeat. Up to that time it had happened almost without fail that the representative of the older class won. But Garry realized that, in the customary absence of any campaigning, the familiarity of his name to many alumni might swing the election. So he wrote a personal letter to every alumnus eligible to vote, asking support of his opponent. The opponent won.

It was Garry who laid the foundations of the Middle Three tradition and who nurtured it carefully in many ways never recorded in the minutes of the Athletic Association. In five years on the campus Garry dug deep into his own pocket many times to help undergraduates—almost invariably athletes who were good all-around boys—who couldn’t get elsewhere the money to stay in college.

His keen powers of analysis could get to the heart of a problem quickly and the clarity of his speaking and writing invariably dispelled the fog in others’ minds.

If the measure of a man’s immortality is the imprint he leaves on the lives of his associates, Garry’s at Rutgers is assured.

Sandy Graham was known to a smaller group of alumni perhaps, but those who joined his wide circle of friends had a deep affection for him.

He joined the staff of the Univerity Library in 1915, bringing a knowledge of of rare books, paintings, and manuscripts which enabled the Library to secure many valuable items.

It was Sandy who began the collection and compilation of biographical data on every man who had ever matriculated at Rutgers and arranged for its preservation and constant usefulness. One of his keen delights was to show an alumni visitor the material on file in a large manila envelope neatly labeled with the man’s name and to watch the look of surprised discovery which invariably followed.

His persistent search for material concerning the history of the University laid the foundation for the present Rutgersia Room in the Library and led, in 1924, to a trip abroad in quest of the original charter granted by King George III to Queen’s College in 1766.

In appearance Sandy looked the scholar he was, although his education was informal and the result of his own energy and skill. He loved the theater and followed closely the careers of all the great actors of his generation. It always pleased him to be mistaken for George Arliss, whom he greatly resembled. His zealous fingers brought together a collection of Hamlet programs and memorabilia which was purchased by Robert Gould Shaw and is now a part of the Harvard University collection. Princeton, the New Jersey Historical Society, and the New York Historical Society were other beneficiaries of his research.

Long after he retired, in 1936, Sandy’s friends continued to seek him out at his home in New Brunswick, to be refreshed by the alertness of his mind, the flash of his humor, the absolute integrity of his character. In these is the measure of his immortality.

E.W.D.