



“Ferris is Paid Final Honors.”

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BIG RAPIDS, Mich. March 28- Big Rapids yesterday buried its most celebrated and best loved citizen. Senator Woodbridge N. Ferris. The State and the Nation had a part in the funeral ceremony but essentially it was a Big Rapids tribute to the man who made the city's name known throughout the country.

All morning the Senator's body lay in state in the spacious, gabled home at the end of Elm Street where he lived with his family for more than 40 years, and all morning the townspeople filed past the flag draped coffin for a last look at the features they knew so well. In the line were white-haired men and women mindful of the day in 1884 when young Woodbridge N. Ferris established his Ferris Institute in what was then an isolated lumber town with 28 saloons. There were middle-aged folks and younger folk who had come under his inspiration through attendance at the Institute. Even the children of Big Rapids came to pay respect to the man for whom all the city had honor and affection.

The body lay in the library with wreaths and bouquets of fragrant flowers thick about it. On open shelves against the walls stood hundreds of books, many worn shabby by the affectionate hand of the schoolmaster and statesman. Portraits of friends and of historical figures he admired looked down on the scene. National Guardsman stood watch over the body of him who as Governor was commander-in-chief of the State's militia.

GUARDSMEN MARCH

Early in the afternoon six companies of guardsmen, headed by a regimental band, escorted the body to the Big Rapids Armory on Michigan Avenue, the principal business street. Marching at half-time to the beat of muffled drums, the escort moved between deserted shops and offices, for all the ordinary pursuits had been abandoned for the day. The sun glittered brightly on the deep snow, and a sharp wind whipped the American flags at half-staff on standards among the curbs.

The armory, which has a capacity of about 1,400 persons, had long been filled, save for the seats reserved for members of the funeral party. The crowd within was no greater than that which, unable to gain entrance, lined the sidewalks in both directions for a block. Drawing up in a double line before the armory, the guardsman presented arms as the coffin was borne inside by the pallbearers designated by Senator Ferris before his death. A line of automobiles discharged the funeral party- Mrs. Ferris, the Senator's two sons and other members of the family, the delegation from the United States Senate and

House of Representatives and the Michigan Legislature, Governor Fred W. Green and other high State officials and the faculty of the Ferris Institute.

The services were conducted by the Rev. Alfred W. Wishart, pastor of the Fountain Street Baptist Church of Grand Rapids, a close friend of Senator Ferris. He read the psalm beginning: "The Lord is my Shepherd," and offered prayer, then introduced Senator Thomas J. Walsh, of Montana, who said the Senate "Like all who knew him, mourned the death of this great and good man." He read a brief autobiography written by Senator Ferris. A Christmas essay by Mr. Ferris was read by Dr. Wishart.

PRAISED BY WISHART

Senator Ferris was "ever the high-minded soul seeking to live honorably among all men," Dr. Wishart said in his funeral address.

"He was a man of rare qualities and attractive personality, admired and loved by all who knew him. His genial, frank and sympathetic manner attracted people to him. They believed in him. His honesty and courage no one doubted.

There was no mystery in his influence over others. He was genuine and sincere. He hated show and pretense. His power for good had its source in his moral idealism. His keen interest in moral issues never flagged. He was a bold, aggressive champion of high ideals. His influence was that of all true men who uphold real values and contend for righteousness and justice.

He was the prophet proclaiming the value and the need of plain-old fashioned virtues. He believed in self-discipline, hard work, simple honesty and loyalty to duty. These were not debatable issues in his philosophy of life. That is why he so often denounced freakish intellectualism and ethical anarchy.

There is no need to inquire here what our beloved friend believed about religion. His actions spoke louder than words. Among his intimates he might discuss the creeds of religion. Before the world he lived a life of grand simplicity and self-denying service. He went about doing good. He dealt justly, he loved mercy and he walked humbly with his good. In his public life he displayed the same virtues which adorned his private relations. He was ever the high-minded soul seeking to live honorably among all men.

AN UPRIGHT CAREER

The political career of Senator Ferris long will be remembered for its sturdy uprightness. There was nothing mean or small in his political striving. His life was not marred by petty jealousy and sordid rivalry. In this respect he may well serve as an example to all those seeking a political career.

No nation can survive a general defiance of the obligations of morality and religion by its public men, its intellectual and political leaders. No amount of material prosperity can serve as a bulwark against ruin if the moral foundations of society are undermined. Political corruption is a deadly poison in the veins of the body politic. This is the unanimous verdict of history. To defy its warnings is to invite disaster.

Finally, the general admiration for Senator Ferris is an eloquent testimonial to the value of true religion. We pay a tribute to religion when we revere the characters of good and honest men. The values of life, that is, the values of lasting merit, do not consist of material gains, great as may be the gifts of God to any people. His greatest gift is men of integrity and lofty purpose, men who love justice and seek righteousness. And when we enshrine such men in our memories and do them honor we confess our faith in the things most precious in life.”

Hymns beloved of Senator Ferris were sung by the Rev. L.L. Dewey of Hastings, former pastor of the First Methodist Church of Big Rapids. Mr. Dewey, a baritone, sang unaccompanied. His selections included “Oh! Lord, Who Would not Let me GO” and “No Night There.”

The body lay at the front of the armory, below the stage on which the speakers stood. The entire end of the building was banked in flowers. Flags hung from the iron girders supporting the room and upon the plain brick walls.

TAPS IS SOUNDED

From the armory, the cortege proceeded to the Highland View Cemetery in the northeastern part of the city, the guardsmen again leading the way. In the center of the cemetery is a steep hill. Circling this to the left, the procession halted before the trees in front of a marble mausoleum bearing the name Woodbridge N. Ferris. Brief prayer services were held, a bugler blew “Taps” and earthly things were at an end for Senator Ferris.