

ALEXANDER DAVIDSON, JR.

Alexander Davidson, Jr., rare bookman, was born in Buffalo, New York, on June 26, 1910, the son of Alexander and Helen (Rohr) Davidson. He entered Williams College, where his father had graduated in 1897, and his uncle two years earlier, with the Class of 1933. There his interest in rare books had its start, in the Chapin Library.

Shortly after graduation, he married Ruth Pamela Murray on June 26, 1933, in Springfield and they left for New York City and a courageous entry into the bookselling business. In those depression years he shared with Howard Mott a ten-by-ten office in midtown Manhattan. For a couple of years before the Second World War, the pall of the depression years lifted, and they moved their still-shared business operation a block or so down 40th Street. It was from there that Davidson volunteered for the Army. He completed officer training, and early found himself in the middle of the Pacific Theatre operations on advanced reconnaissance with the infantry. In his thirty months of combat duty he earned the Bronze Star, five battle stars, and the Purple Heart. Returning from the war, Davidson again joined Mott on 40th Street until he bought the brownstone house on the upper East Side which he had for home and bookstore. Specializing in Americana, he had built himself a sound business, gaining the respect of customers and competitors alike. The hospitality lavished by Davidson and his wife was legendary, and he boasted in a letter to Clarence Brigham, "I have the only bookshop in the world that is furnished with two ice boxes." He often sent odd books and papers to this Society before his decision in 1957, "to go into business, but just what use American industry can make of my particular talents remains to be seen." As it worked out, American industry never had a chance to display its vaunted

ingenuity, for Davidson was soon made librarian of the Grolier Club, to which he had been elected to membership when but three years out of college. He had also served on its council for a number of years.

His election to this Society occurred, not in 1936, but in 1960 at the Boston meeting. Mr. Shipton wrote, "I don't know when I have been more pleased than I was by yesterday's procedure. Your name has been on the books for some years, but you had been passed over because you were too young." Shortly after election, Davidson suffered a severe stroke which forced him to relinquish his duties at the Grolier Club in 1961. He had been an early vice-president of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America and secretary of the Bibliographical Society of America. After this long debilitating illness attending the first stroke, Davidson suffered another stroke and died at his home in New York on May 13, 1967, survived by his wife. He is remembered for his scholarship, wit, and kindness. He was, above all else, a great gentleman.

J. E. M.

PRESTON DAVIE

Preston Davie, lawyer, was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on the last day of January, 1881, the son of George Montgomery and Margaret Howard (Preston) Davie. Before entering college, he prepared at Lawrenceville and with private tutors. After graduating at Harvard with the Class of 1904, he left the Yard and crossed the street to the Law School where he spent two years. Before finishing he returned to Louisville, where he entered his father's firm and was admitted to the Kentucky bar in 1906.

In 1909 he again came East, and joined the New York firm of O'Brien, Boardman & Platt, remaining there until

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