President Lovett Used Term ‘University’ Often

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I have been asked about the views of my father on the name of Rice. To him Rice was first, last and always a university and should have been known by this broader term. He told me just that on a number of occasions. He rarely referred to the Rice Institute in any document or public statement without the phrase “a university of liberal and technical learning.” Similar phrases appear in his notes made in the spring of 1908 in his own handwriting on recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

My earliest recollection of confusion over Rice’s name is of an incident on a trip I took with my father to Boston in the fall of 1910 to see Ralph Adams Cram about building plans. We were crossing the Hudson river by ferryboat from Jersey City to New York City at dusk on an October day. He met a friend of Princeton days whom he had not seen for sometime. This friend made some observation about Rice obviously based on his impressions from the word “Institute.” My father spent most of the crossing explaining that Rice, in keeping with its broad and liberal charter, was entering upon a university program and would not be a school of limited curriculum and interest of the kind that might ordinarily be contemplated by the word “Institute.” My father handed the friend the pamphlet or prospectus that he carried, pointing out the plot of the 300 acre campus prepared by Mr. Cram on which appear the proposed quadrangle for schools or colleges of humanities, science and technology and also of law and medicine, and other graduate subjects.

Down through the years, on repeated occasions, it has been necessary to assure visitors to our campus that Rice was not “an institute of this or that” but “a university of liberal and technical learning dedicated to the advancement of letters, science and art.” This may be understood locally, in Houston and Texas, but the name “The Rice Institute” by which our university is more generally known does not carry with it to other claims the broad meaning of the word “University.” It is wholly impracticable to include the words “For the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art” in daily or casual references to Rice.

As recently as this past fall I found it necessary to assure officials of college preparatory schools in Pennsylvania and New England, some of whom had visited our campus, that Rice would not require for entrance more than the usual number of credits in mathematics and science, was not limited in its curriculum to engineering and science alone, and had an equally alive and progressive department or division of the humanities which had awarded more than one-half of

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the degrees given by Rice since its opening.

I do not recall that during my father's lifetime any proposals to change Rice's name were made. If the present proposal had been made, I am sure that he would have favored it. The proposed name does honor to the founder and rolls into one all-inclusive word "University" the phrase "For the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art." The real reason for changing the name is to call Rice what it is—a university.