Two Rice Alma Maters Share ‘Official’ Status

By PHIL GARON
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The opening games of the football season have precipitated a familiar note of discord on campus, centered around the ill-defined status of the Rice alma mater.

Speaking for the Alumni Association, President W. L. Davis gave his own personal feelings on the controversy: “I think that it is regrettable that we have this problem at all. The alumni reaction to this situation is stronger than on most of the major issues the University has faced.

Something the Same

“I particularly did not like the manner in which ‘Rice Is Our Home’ was presented during the half-time of the West Virginia game. My hope is that we will not divide and have two songs. One wants something to stay the same, something to tie with.”

Bill Timme, SA President, stated that at the present time two songs, “Rice’s Honor” and “Rice Is Our Home,” have equal status as school alma maters, but added that, the students are “basically dissatisfied with this situation, and we are going to bring it under negotiation as soon as possible.”

The presence of two school hymns has long been a thorn in the sides of both the student body and the alumni. The “traditional” alma mater of the school, “Rice’s Honor,” received a general, indifferent acceptance from most of the members of the university for many years after its inception.

We Will Fight

Then a group of students launched a campaign decrying “Rice’s Honor” as nothing more than a glorified fight song, replete with militant phrases such as “we will fight on,” and “we will be fighting when this day is done.” Even the isochronous rhythm, lent itself more easily to old marches than to old mothers.

This conflict over a so-called lack of dignity in the song saw the genesis of the more sedate “Rice Is Our Home,” performed to the tune of Sibelius’ “Finlandia.” The adoption as the school song of “Rice Is Our Home,” a paean to “cherished days” at The University, seemed to offer a good solution for everybody . . . well, almost everybody.

Seats Bring Split

The plot began to thicken when the Rice Alumni Association stepped into the picture to proclaim that a great injustice had been done. The emergence of the fledgling “Rice Is Our Home” was a serious break with tradition, a violation of one of the great old University standards.

The student body, sensing a challenge to the justness of

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their own cause, did not take the matter sitting down; rather, they did take it sitting down. At the next fall football game, half the students refused to rise for the playing of “Rice’s Honor.” The lines were drawn; the Great Schism had been effected.

Enter the third, and inevitable, character of the drama: the Administration. Seeing the situation as potentially injurious to relations with the alumni, administrative officers worked out a type of settlement designed with the “best interests of everyone in mind.”

**Rice Wins Distinction**

Some of the points of this compromise were: (1) “Rice’s Honor” shall be played at the beginning of all athletic contests; (2) “Rice Is Our Home” is played at the close of athletic contests, as long as the current Student Senate requests it; (3) “Rice Is Our Home” will be used at commencement if the seniors request it; and (4) “Rice’s Honor” is henceforth to be known as the alma mater; “Rice Is Our Home,” as the school song (the distinction between the two being quite obvious to everyone).

And this is the situation at present. Rice enjoys the somewhat unique distinction of being a university with two alma maters, and while both factions feel appeased, no one is really satisfied.

A letter from President Pitzer on the subject stated that “final settlement of the song question will await an agreement enlisting the support of both the alumni and the then currently enrolled student body.” Until negotiations can be initiated, Rice will continue to give the dubious status of being a dual-alma mater’d University.