

# Paul Russel Pope

*October 27, 1877 — January 12, 1950*

Paul Russel Pope, Professor of German, Emeritus, died in Ithaca on January 12, 1950, five years after his retirement in 1945. Professor Pope was born at Ann Arbor, Michigan, on October 27, 1877, the son of a prominent Methodist minister. He received his B. A. degree from Western Reserve University in 1898 and, having decided to devote himself to the study of the modern languages, he went to Germany to seek what was then the best possible training in that field. After several semesters at Halle and Berlin he obtained his Ph. D. from the University of Leipzig in 1903. It would be difficult to imagine a more distinguished faculty than that under which the young Paul Pope acquired the tools and, above all, the spirit that were to make his own career so effective. Among his teachers were the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt and the literary historian Albert Koster, and his dissertation on *Die Anwendune Der Epitheta Im Tristan Gottfrieds Von Strassburg* was written under the guidance of Professor Eduard Sievers whose revolutionary methods of phonetic analysis continued to influence Pope's subsequent work. At Leipzig he devoted himself as well to the study of the violin—he worked especially under Becker and, later, Duncla—and developed that understanding and enthusiasm for music that was to remain such a characteristic element of his later life.

He was appointed Instructor in German at Cornell University in 1902 and continued throughout his life to teach in that Department. He was promoted to an assistant professorship in 1906, and became Professor of German in 1915. He served repeatedly as Chairman of the Department. On several occasions he returned to Europe, and, in 1913 and 1914 spent a year in Switzerland, Italy and at the University of Munich.

His skill as a teacher of the German language and literature was remarkable from the very beginning, and by his numerous text books (especially his admirable *Einführung ins Deutsche*) he exercised a considerable influence upon modern language instruction throughout the country.

But what above all made him a stimulating figure in the University community was his sensitiveness to every aspect of the intellectual and artistic life. By his own playing of the violin and his lectures on the appreciation of music, he contributed significantly towards the development of an ever wider enthusiasm, particularly for chamber music. He served for several terms on the Music Committee of the University. It was, perhaps, his great admiration for Richard Wagner and his circle that made him proud to insist that he, too, was, in Nietzsche's phrase, *Philologe und Musiker*. Some of his literary studies were devoted to and they were to have been more fully developed in a work

on *Wagner's Debt to Literature*. But Paul Pope was not merely an efficient and beloved teacher. His home became a center of the most congenial fellowship: many of his friends will recall with affection the Sunday afternoons at Overlook Road where it was impossible not to be delighted by Paul Pope's music or impressed by his faith in the vitality of the civilizing values of art and letters which, for him especially, the interplay between American and European life provided.

His summers in Canada gave him an opportunity, not only for boating and canoeing of which he was so fond, but for the development of his interest in Indian languages and relics.

Professor Pope's services to the profession were early recognized: he was a member and frequently an officer of the Modern Language Association of America and of the American Association of the Teachers of German. He helped to found the German honorary society Delta Phi Alpha and continued for many years to function as a national adviser. He was a member of the scholastic honorary societies Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. During the early years of the second World War he served, after his retirement, on the Cornell staff of the Army Specialized Training Program in German.

His colleagues and students will remember Paul Pope with affection and the University will count him among its distinguished faculty members.

*A. L. Andrews, Victor Lange, R. M. Ogden*