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## Lars W. Boe, Educator and Legislator

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## Iowans Who Achieved Greatly

LARS W. BOE, Educator and Legislator

Lars Wilhelm Boe was born on December 27, 1875, in Calumet, Michigan, the son of Pastor Nils E. Boe and Anna Reque Boe. Four years later the family moved to Leland, Illinois, where his father served as pastor of several Lutheran congregations, and ten years later to Silver Lake, Iowa, where his father had accepted another call. Doctor Boe died December 27, 1942, at Northfield, Minn.

His pre-collegiate training was taken at the St. Ansgar Seminary and at the preparatory department of the United Lutheran Church Seminary at Minneapolis. In 1894 he entered the freshmen class at St. Olaf College and graduated from that institution in 1898. During the following three years he studied theology at the United Lutheran Church Seminary at St. Paul, graduating as a Candidate of Theology in 1901. After serving for three years as the pastor of several Lutheran congregations at Lawler, Iowa, he was called in 1904 to the presidency of the newly-organized Waldorf College at Forest City, Iowa, a position which he held until 1915. During his incumbency of this office, he showed the eminent qualities of leadership and the breadth of interests which were to characterize his subsequent career by placing this young and struggling institution on a sound financial basis and winning scholarly recognition for it in the church and in the larger community. For many years during this period he also served as the pastor of the local Lutheran Church. In the interest of better government, he entered the political arena and served as a member of the lower house of the Iowa Legislature from 1909 to 1911 and as a member of the State Senate from 1911 to 1913. He was urged by many state leaders to become a candidate for the State governorship but preferred to return to his profession as an educator and churchman.

In 1915 he resigned from the presidency of Waldorf College to take on the position of Financial and Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Education of the United Lutheran Church of America, continuing in the same office after the Church Union of 1917 and the formation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

At the early June Convention of this Church body in 1918, he was elected president of St. Olaf College and took on this position on September 1 of the same year. The difficult war situation and the severe influenza epidemic, which invaded the college population and caused many deaths, was a severe test of the judgment and courage of the new leader, but gave equal proof of his ability to solve these as well as the difficult problems of the post-war period.

During the twenty-four years in which he was the head of the college, the student registration rose from 650 to 1,150; a new group of modern buildings was erected at a cost of more than one and a half million dollars, and its various endowment funds greatly increased. The advance during these years, in scholastic standing and teaching efficiency was equally impressive and could be credited as well to the vision and the enthusiasm of the president as to the cordial and whole-hearted cooperative spirit existing between president, faculty, and student organizations. President Boe's deepest interest, however, went beyond those of scholarship and administration and centered particularly on the sound and rich development of the religious and spiritual life in the staff and student membership. The results of his care and his efforts in this field will surely be felt for years to come.

President Boe ranked high among the leaders in the former United Church and in the later Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. He held numerous offices on important boards and commissions, his advice was sought on many important undertakings, and his voice carried authority in the annual church conventions. Some of the enterprises in which he took a leading part

were the founding of the Pastors' Pension System, the launching of the Lutheran Men's Brotherhood and the Centennial Fund drive. He was one of the first promoters of the Norwegian-American Historical Association and served during the last five years as its vice-president.

During the first World War he took a leading part in organizing the inter-synodical plan for the Lutheran Soldiers' Welfare Service, which led to the organization of the National Lutheran Council, of which he was a member up to his death. He was also one of the American representatives on the international committee of the Lutheran World Convention and for a number of years made an annual tour in Europe to consult and plan with other representatives in regard to Lutheran world and mission problems.

During the last few years his chief interest lay in the field of Lutheran church union. He participated in the formation of the American Lutheran Conference, was a delegate of his church to its annual conferences, and wrote and spoke vigorously for an extension of the union movement to all American Lutheran bodies. Much of the inspiration as well as the actual planning for this hopeful movement can be put to his credit.

President Boe was the recipient of many honors and distinctions. He received the honorary D. D. degree from Roanoke College and LL.D. and Litt. D. degrees from Wittenberg College. In 1924 he was decorated by the King of Norway with the Knighthood of the Order of St. Olaf and was raised in 1940 to the rank of Commander in the same Order. He was at one time president of the National Association of Lutheran Colleges, and from 1937 held the position of president of the State Council of Minnesota Colleges.

President Boe was married in 1909 to Helga Jacobson, at that time a member of the faculty of Waldorf College, who, with their two daughters, Esther and Margaret, both graduates of St. Olaf, survives him. A brother, Lt.

Col. A. J. Boe, chaplain in the U. S. Army, and a sister, Mrs. A. M. Sattre of Moorhead, Minnesota, also mourn his passing.

C. A. Mellby, Northfield, Minn.

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#### WILLBUR A. REASER, Portrait Artist

The passing of Willbur Aaron Reaser was almost unnoticed in Iowa, where he made his start for a notable career as an artist, because he was of a generation of long ago. He was 82 years old. He was a self-made and self-educated artist who rose high in his profession, and his work will be admired by many yet unborn.

The State of Iowa has in the portrait gallery of famous Iowa men, a part of the State Department of History and Archives, four admirable productions from the brush of Mr. Reaser.

A very large and striking portrait of the late Henry Wallace, the founder of Wallace's Farmer, famous in advancement of agriculture; father of Henry C. Wallace, secretary of agriculture, and grandfather of Henry A. Wallace, also secretary of agriculture, and vice president of the United States.

Portrait of James Wilson, first secretary of agriculture from Iowa; famous as a writer on agricultural topics; prominent in founding and development of the State college at Ames.

Portrait of Rev. William Seeley Lewis, bishop of the Methodist church and founder of Morningside College.

Portrait of James Depew Edmundson, who provided in his will for the building of the Edmundson Museum of Art in Des Moines; notable for his charities.

These are all fine specimens of the good work of Mr. Reaser. Late in 1939 Mr. Reaser gave an exhibition of his work in Des Moines, including a number of portraits of Iowa people, and for this he also had the Edmundson and other portraits on loan from the Department. Mr. Reaser had been called "the official portrait painter of Des Moines" because of his work in the capital city. In

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