

Dr. James Crowdle, Chemistry Dept., Retires Founder of the Griffin and DiGamma Society

By PETER LAUX

Last month marked the retirement of a man who had served Canisius College for forty-five years. Dr. James Crowdle came to Canisius in January 1919, and, aside from his official duties in the Chemistry Department, could be credited with the title Chief Innovator during his tenure. Among his accomplishments, Dr. Crowdle numbers the founding of **The Griffin**, and the **DiGamma Honor Society** as well as the establishment of the doubleheader basketball program.

Dr. Crowdle explained that he was actually co-founder of the campus newspaper with another faculty member, Manuel Rivera. He had become interested in journalism as an undergraduate at Boston College where he worked on **The Heights** and at the same time, he was a correspondent for a Buffalo newspaper. Back at Canisius, Dr. Crowdle "saw the need for a newspaper."

THE GRIFFIN was founded in 1928 and first appeared as the **Canisian**. "The paper started out unfinanced," said Dr. Crowdle. "It was difficult to get the administration involved in anything that cost money." He added, "I guess that's still true." The paper was sold for the first few issues and the next year was allocated a small budget. "While there was no student

initiative in the founding of the paper," Dr. Crowdle observed, "student interest in the next two years increased and gradually the paper assumed its present make-up."

The biggest problem with the early newspaper was one which has continued to plague it. Dr. Crowdle recalled one glaring misprint from an early issue in which Virgil was called "the renowned Roman pot."

Dr. Crowdle said that he was pleased with the development of the paper and had special praise for the editorials of Bob Yuhnke of two years ago. "Space-wise the paper has improved, as well as style of writing, quality, and coverage," he stated. On a subject close to Yuhnke's heart, Dr. Crowdle remarked, "I think we're big enough now for a weekly edition of the newspaper."

In the late 1930's, Dr. Crowdle was instrumental in the establishment of the **DiGamma Honor Society**. "We thought it would be a good idea to have an honor society chosen by the students. It was modeled after a similar organization at Yale." He recalled that soon after its founding a Dean attempted to impose his own regulations on the society and operations were suspended, but **DiGamma** was revived within a couple of years.

From 1936 until the mid-50's Dr. Crowdle mixed science with sports. In 1936, Dr. Crowdle founded the doubleheader basketball program which began in the old Broadway Auditorium. In 1941, the program moved into the newly completed Memorial Auditorium; this signaled the arrival of big-time basketball in Buffalo. Explaining his interest in basketball Dr. Crowdle said, "I've always been a frustrated athlete."

Eventually, he attained the post of Graduate Manager of Athletics which is comparable to today's Director of Athletics. He held the post until 1952 when he was succeeded by Joe

Curran. "I was caught in the rapid turnover in the early 50's and was 'resigned.'"

Commenting on the present situation, Dr. Crowdle advocated the building of a new fieldhouse. "This is needed not especially for intercollegiate athletics but, rather, for student use, such as a full intramural program."

Dr. Crowdle mentioned the Alumni Chemical Association as another one of the clubs he founded. "I started a lot of defunct organizations," he recalled. Defunct organizations brought to mind the Chess Club of which Dr. Crowdle was one-time moderator. "The problem with the chess club was that it changed into a social group. It had been a serious organization and even took trips to participate in matches with other colleges."

Finally, Dr. Crowdle advocated the expansion of the College. "When I came here, Boston College had one building, and Canisius had one building. You can take it from there. Other colleges have moved from the city; I guess there's too much of an investment now to move, but that's what they told me twenty-five years ago."

Now retired, Dr. Crowdle said that he no longer has any official connection with Canisius. He plans to spend much of his time writing. He explained, "I've also always been a frustrated journalist."