

The Reynolds Rich Smith Award



Reynolds Rich Smith

The Reynolds Rich Smith Award, RRSA, was established in 1949 to honor the memory of Brother Reynolds Rich Smith. It is presented to the undergrad “who has shown the best all around performance in terms of leadership, scholarship, character and manliness.” The winner was originally presented with a \$50 stipend. This has been increased now to over \$1,000.

The award was established by Brother, Don Smith '32, as a tribute to his brother Reynolds. The Smith family has a rich Fiji tradition. Reynolds didn't stand a chance with his father and 2 brothers, Clem & Don, all Michigan Fijis.

Reynolds's father, Shirley W. Smith, class of 1897, lived in Ann Arbor, and worked for the University in several capacities, including Secretary, Business Manager, and Vice President of the University, until his retirement in 1945. He also authored a humorous story, “The sprightly Adventures of Instructor Simpson: A Merry Tale of Base Ball, a Not-too-young Instructor and the Laboratory Sink.”, which was later made into a movie (premiered at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor) under the title “[It Happens Every Spring](#)”, starring Ray Milland. He was a great supporter of the fraternity in its early days, and well into the 1900s.

Many of the ‘old timers’ will remember how unsuspecting Freshmen pledges, would be fixed up with ‘Shirley’ as a promising date. The young man would go to his house at 1706 South University, with high hopes, and even a bouquet at times, only to be very surprised to discover that the potential date, ‘Shirley’, was not a member of the opposite sex. Shirley was a good sport in supporting this prank for many years. George Qua '52, Shirley's grandson, is restoring the tradition of the RRSA, and has presented the award in recent years.



Shirley Smith

Reynolds had pledged Phi Gamma Delta when he was 18. He was subsequently accepted to the Military Academy at West Point, where he unfortunately succumbed to the flu in 1919. He passed ad astra February 2, 1919. Eight member of Phi Gamma Delta, who were former enlisted men in the service, and other members of the fraternity served as active and honorary pall-bearers at his funeral. As a youth, Reynolds aspired to achieve the high principles of “honor, obedience, and knightliness of the men of West Point”.



Reynolds (right) with Fiji brother, Clem '23

His untimely death cut short the dreams of this “manful youth, whose sun had set ere it had reached noon”, said Rev. [Lloyd C. Douglas](#) at his funeral. Lloyd Douglas, Wittenberg Fiji 1900, later went on to author the best selling novels, [Magnificent Obsession](#), and [The Robe](#).



Smith family circa 1917



Lloyd C. Douglas

A plaque, in tribute to Reynolds, is still mounted over the fireplace in the living room at 707 Oxford.

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