

## Report to Polanyi Society on Poteat Conference

The Polanyi Society sponsored the conference, “The Primacy of Persons: The Legacy of William H. Poteat” at Yale University June 6-8, 2014 to acknowledge, celebrate, and make better known and more accessible Poteat’s work. 35 persons attended the conference, two of whom came from Europe and one from Canada. There were 21 formal presentations plus sessions that were devoted to sharing of memories, anecdotes, and musings about Poteat, his teaching strategies, and implications posed by the conference. Thanks to the generosity of several participants, the entire conference was recorded by a professional videographer for video playback and is presently being edited.

The conference has so far resulted in two products. The first is a website, <http://whpoteat.org>, which features biographical and academic information about Poteat, links to articles, a detailed description of the conference, links to all papers presented at the conference, and, once editing is complete, a video of the complete conference. The second product is a Wikipedia article, “William H. Poteat.” Other articles are being developed. Also under consideration are publications, blogs, and future conferences.

The initial reason for holding the conference at Yale was to acknowledge and publicly introduce the archive of Poteat’s letters, lectures, and unpublished papers, which continues to grow as more contributions are received. In addition, a bronze sculpture was given to Yale Divinity School in Poteat’s honor. The sculpture, “From Catastrophe to Rebirth,” is by world-renowned Greek sculptor Evangelos Moustákas, a close friend of Poteat. Along with the sculpture, a stunning color print of Orpheus and Euridice by Moustákas and a beautiful art poster of haiku poetry by Moustákas’s wife, Zoe Sabina, herself a poet of international stature, were given to YDS in honor of Poteat.

The conference planning committee, comprising Dale Cannon, James Clement van Pelt, and Walter Mead, wishes to thank several people for their roles in the conference, especially the Polanyi Society for its official sponsorship of the conference. The Polanyi Society was represented at the conference by its President, David Rutledge, who presented the opening introduction and later gave two presentations in a special section devoted to the Poteat-Polanyi connection. The planning committee also expresses its gratitude to: donors who covered the deposit; donors who contributed canceled registration fees; donors who contributed to the artwork; Betty Eidenier, who coordinated the campaign for the artwork; Kieran Cashell and his wife Rachel, who set up and now administer the Poteat website; Yale Divinity School Special Collections Librarian Professor Martha Smalley and Walter Mead, who have worked to put the archive together; Yale Divinity School and Yale Conference Services for their hospitality and support; and finally the presenters and participants who, singly and together, made the conference an unforgettable experience of convivial scholarship at its best and deserve our deep gratitude for creating a treasure trove for future Poteat scholarship.

Polanyi Society members and others are encouraged to visit the <http://whpoteat.org> website, download papers of interest, as well as view and listen to the video recordings of presentations and discussions soon to be available there.

Dale Cannon, James Clement van Pelt, and Wally Mead