

Richard O. Ristine

Wabash '41

Oxford Cup Roll No. 048

Dr. Seth R. Brooks, *St. Lawrence '22*, wrote in his inaugural "Inter Fratres" article on the ever-important subject of recruitment. Brooks suggested "A boy is not conferring an honor on our Fraternity when he pledges" but rather the Fraternity is "conferring an honor upon him." The article closes in classic Brooks' fashion, "Resolve that the delegation you pledge shall be an honor and a credit to the Founders and those who have followed in a long, illustrious line."

Richard O. Ristine, *Wabash '41*, was no stranger to the concept of "a long, illustrious line" when he was a student at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. More than 60 members of his family have attended the 170-year-old institution, including 11 faculty members and nine members of the college's Board of Trustees. At least one member of his family has served on the Board since the college's founding in 1832.

As an undergraduate, Ristine was active in numerous campus roles, including yearbook editor, Glee Club, Varsity football team, president of Young Republicans and, of course, Beta Theta Pi. A Phi Beta Kappa, he graduated summa cum laude in 1941.

After earning his bachelor of laws degree from Columbia University in just 22 months, Ristine served as a captain in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 1943-46. Four years later, Ristine was to follow in another "long, illustrious line."

His great-great-grandfather, Major Henry Ristine — Crawfordsville's second settler — served in the state legislature in the 1820s. Theodore Harmon Ristine, Richard's grandfather, served in the state senate in the 1880s. In 1950, the 30-year-old Ristine was elected to the Indiana Senate, serving through 1960 in capacities such as chairman of the finance committee and four years of service on the state budget committee. Ristine continued his public service from 1961-65 as lieutenant governor under then-Governor Matthew E. Welsh. He was the 1964 Republican nominee for governor.

Ristine has served passionately as member, director and chairman of numerous corporate and non-profit boards, including the Indiana Historical Society, Meridian Mutual Insurance Company, Elston Bank & Trust, L.S. Ayres & Company, Indiana State Board of Mental Health, The Nature Conservancy and the advisory committee for the U.S. Small Business Administration. He was executive vice president and secretary of Lilly Endowment, 1972-83.

Ristine has been an integral part of the Wabash community since his graduation some 61 years ago. He served as trustee (1958-93) and treasurer of the College 1966 to 1975. He was president of the National Association of Wabash men from 1956-58, and has served as president of the Wabash Foundation. Ristine also served as director of planned giving, 1983-84; director of development, 1985-89, and director of external affairs, 1992-93.

The former lieutenant governor is a nine-time recipient of the Sagamore of the Wabash — the highest honor that can be given by an Indiana governor. Ristine has also been presented with the George Rogers Clark award, which honors modern-day Hoosiers whose lives and careers are symbolic of the ideals and dreams of the prominent frontiersman.

With the presentation of the Oxford Cup, Beta Theta Pi confers another honor on Ristine. He is a credit to the Fraternity, its founders and has most certainly followed in the "long, illustrious line." it's not what you said that's going to be measured, it's what you did that actually counts."

— *Thomas C. Olver, Central Michigan '98, Editor, The Beta Theta Pi*