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UA68/6/2 Presentation of the First Annual Gordon Wilson Award

WKU Leiper English Club

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PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST ANNUAL GORDON WILSON AWARD -- OCTOBER 1, 1959

It is a typical human characteristic to want to be remembered after one's active days are over. Rich men, even though they may have risen from poverty, love to endow art galleries, foundations, colleges, and other worth-while institutions. People, wealthy and not so wealthy, often perpetuate their names by giving them to their first-born sons. Colleges often show, by the names of their awards and buildings and grants, who once served and loved the institutions of learning. It is with a genuine though humble pride that I have been remembered by an award to the outstanding senior each October at the first meeting of the Leiper English Club, the club itself a memorial to Dr. Macen A. Leiper, the first head of the English department at Western and the first sponsor of the club. My pride in the prospects of the department and the club as groups is matched by my pride in the individual students for whom both of these exist. And I rejoice that annually some one will be given a recognition for scholarship and the other fine qualifications enumerated in the constitution of the foundation.

In recognizing Mary Ruth Grise as the first recipient, I am doubly rewarded, for she has been my student in several classes. I have known her all her life, and I have been associated with her outside college in a variety of ways. Away back in the early days of my teaching, her father-to-be was my roommate and my student in Latin, a field in which he became a recognized scholar. Mary Ruth is a good student, a good and valuable member of the community, a girl who has been a leader all her life. The ones who follow her as holders of this award will have to make, as she has done, an effort to translate great language, great literature, great literary history into effective, cheerful, wholesome living. Mary Ruth, I salute you and all your successors.