

Jim Casey To Graduate . . . Era Ends

By MICHAEL BLATZ

As must happen to all Penn State men, James A. Casey faces the possibility of being a candidate for a bachelor's degree at next week's commencement exercises.

This item would be of little significance as a news story were it not for the fact that down through the years Casey has become a Penn State tradition — and surely the passing of a tradition warrants a few words. His name is almost a Penn State legend and thousands of people have come to accept it as being synonymous with such ivy-covered places as Old Main, Recreation Hall, the Lion shrine, the Ag barns, the Mall, the East-End Tearoom and a host of other spots that stir alumni memories. While Casey is no ivy-covered monument, still the number of shaggy dog stories told about him are countless.

One of the most erroneous tales already being circulated about Casey, who has been on the campus longer than most people care to remember, is that he was on hand to greet Abe Lincoln when the president came up to dedicate Penn State as a Land-Grant Col-

lege, back in 1863.

In an exclusive interview with The Collegian, Casey denied this rumor, saying that Lincoln did not make it to State College for the ceremonies. He missed connections with the Boalsburg and Bellefonte Central stagecoach at Lewistown. Since the coach only made one trip weekly, the president never got in to State College.

His story is verified by old College documents which also record the cancellation of a dinner at Ye Olde Corner Inn in the great Emancipator's honor. The records were signed, purely a coincidence of course, by one J. A. Casey, Esq.

While there seems to be great confusion as to when Jim did come to State, it is most likely that he first came to Penn State in the fall of 1941, a mere 13 semesters ago.

He took the psych tests given all incoming freshmen and, despite the results of the test which hinted that he'd make a good minister, Casey set out determinedly to major in physics.

His perseverance is now bearing fruit, for after 13 semesters and some 180 credits attempted, his de-

Casey at the Bar



gree is almost in sight . . . a fact that should cheer the heart and inspire all students who might feel that winning a degree is hopeless.

During the war years when the male enrollment was rather lean, Casey did his part to keep things going. Would the 'Skellar close for lack of patrons? Not if Casey could help it, so he took to spending at least six nights a week in the 'Skellar stirring up trade. Might the local theaters close? Not as long as Casey was on hand to attend all performances, evening and matinee. Local buses bringing former Penn State men on furlough from the services were all met by Casey. Some say that Casey must be twins or triplets to always be in so many places in the course of the day. Others say that Casey was the sole support of the local merchants during those lean and hungry war years and that a movement is underfoot to dedicate "Hurrah for Casey Day" to him annually on the first of Shrdlu.

This movement will not conflict with the others underway: the movement to have Casey plastered on a panel in Old Main by that noted frescoer H. V. Poor, or the one to raise funds to have a saddle placed on Warneke's Lion and a granite statue made of Casey, sword in hand and the cry of "Freedom!" on his lips.

As a student, nothing need be said for Casey . . . as an activities man some of his titles might be listed.

Creative and energetic, he has founded many organizations at State. Until Casey appeared on the scene there had never been an Independent Student Committee on campus; and once organized to the point where shingles and keys had been made for the charter members, Casey turned the society over to the lesser lights to run. He was an honorary member of Tribunal, a post never before or since held by anyone else. Seeing a need, Casey promptly created the position. He is the only person to ever hold the honorary title "Official Kibitzer" on The Collegian staff.

As an example of the important roles Casey has held on Campus, the case of Froth magazine might be considered. When he dropped out of school for a semester, the humor magazine, of which he was business manager, folded completely and hasn't been able to get out of the red and start up since.

Asked what he had gotten from his tenure at the College, he said that he had a broad education and made some excellent contacts.

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