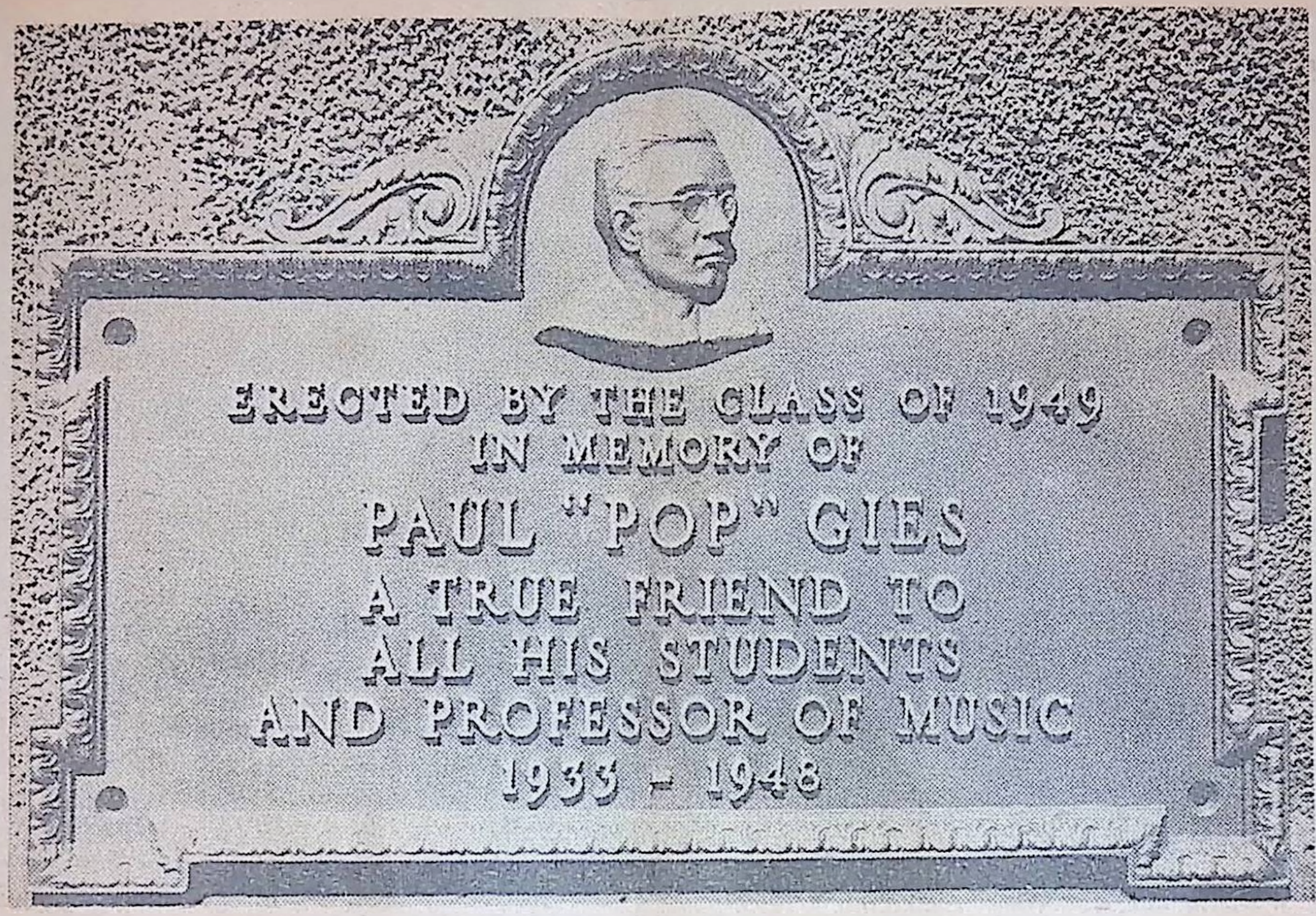
Wilkes Seniors To Present Plaque Honoring Late Prof. Gies



The senior class of Wilkes College will present the institution with a plaque honoring the late Professor Paul "Pop" Gies tonight at the second annual Senior dinner dance in Hotel Sterling.

Thomas J. Morgan, president of the 1949 graduating class, will make the presentation on behalf of the class to Dr. Eugene S. Farley, president of Wilkes College.

The plaque will be hung in Gies Hall, home of the Wilkes College School of Music on South Franklin street.

Prof. Gies, or "Pop" as he was known and preferred to be called by his students, came to the local college in 1933—the same year that Bucknell University Junior College was founded.

Besides his work here, "Pop" Gies became well known throughout the northeastern part of the State for his work in the musical world, particularly for his part in the Bach Festivals.

The 1949 graduating class is the last to have had Prof. Gies as a music instructor.

The plaque will be hung in Gies Hall at a ceremony to be held at a later date.

Paul Gies, Wilkes Music Director, Claimed by Death

Noted Musician Was Also Leader of Concordia; Funeral Saturday Morning at 11

Prof. Paul Gies, head of the music department at Wilkes College and well known as a musician, throughout the state, passed away at 7:45 yesterday morning in Mercy Hospital following several weeks' illness. He was 55.

Musician Dies

PROF. PAUL GIES

The noted teacher and conductor was stricken ill in November, shortly before he was to conduct the Concordia concert here on December 8. He recovered sufficiently to spend the Christmas holidays at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward O'Connor, 252 South River Street. While there he became ill and was unable to be removed to his apartment in Chase Hall of Wilkes College. He was taken to the hospital two weeks ago.

Prof. Gies collapsed two years ago while conducting a concert at Scranton. He then underwent a serious operation from which he never fully recovered.

Funeral Saturday

His body has been removed to the Harold C. Snowdon Home for Funerals, 64 North Franklin Street, where friends may call tonight. Funeral services will be conducted Saturday morning at 11 in St. Paul's Lutheran Church with the pastor, Rev. Carl J. Schindler, officiating. Interment will be in Oaklawn Cemetery. The casket will not be opened at the church.

Prof. Gies first came to Wyoming Valley as guest lecturer when Bucknell Junior College, now Wilkes College, was organized. He immediately began to take an active part in musical affairs of the region and had a large part in the formation of the Wilkes-Barre Symphony Orchestra and the Wilkes-Barre-Scranton Sinfonietta, both of which he directed in several concerts.

He was a native of Germany and laid the groundwork for his musical career at the universities of Heidelberg and Bonn.

While a boy he attended school in Godesburg, where one of his fellow students was Rudolph Hess, who became the No. 3 man in Nazi Germany and later fled to Scotland.

Wounded in War

The first World War cut short Prof. Gies' career as a concert pianist when he was called into the German Army in the first mobilization. He served during the entire conflict as a lieutenant in the field artillery and took part in most of the major engagements on the Western Front. He sustained several wounds, the nature of which prevented resumption of his concert career.

From 1919 until 1924, when he came to America, Prof. Gies was director of the Music Academy of Heidelberg, being conductor of the Heidelberg - Kammer Orchestra during the same period. In 1922 he was guest conductor at the famous Bach-Roger music festival.

Arriving in this country, Prof. Gies resided for a time in Kansas City, but later became an instructor in Harmony at Temple University, Philadelphia. In the early '30's, he was named associate professor of music at Bucknell University, and upon establishment of the junior college, frequently came to Wilkes-Barre as a lecturer.

Regarded as a foremost interpreter of German music, Prof. Gies specialized in the fields of violin and piano, and as a conductor and composer. His composition, "Love's Adversity," was sung for the first time at the Concordia concert in December, which he was unable to attend because of illness.

Headed Concordia

In 1942 he was selected as director of Concordia Singing Society to succeed the late Prof. Adolph Hansen, and in 1945, the Scranton Junger Maennerchor appointed him director of that group. He was a member of musical organizations, including the Common Repertoire Committee of the Associated Glee Clubs of America.

Prof. Gies moved to Wilkes-Barre several years ago when he became head of the music department at the Junior College. Affectionately known as "Pop" to students and associates, he maintained an apartment in Chase Hall, 184 South River Street.

He was unmarried and is survived only by two brothers and a sister in Germany.

NEW POST FOR PROF. GIES

Direction of the Scranton Junger Maennerchor will be in competent hands with the appointment of Professor Paul Gies of Wilkes-Barre to fill the vacancy in the post of conductor.

Professor Gies is no stranger in the Lackawanna County seat because of his connection with the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre Sinfonietta. It is a coincidence that he should succeed the late Adolf Hansen as conductor of Concordia Singing Society and then take charge of the Maennerchor which Professor Hansen conducted years ago. While the Maennerchor is not as old as Concordia, it has a half century of accomplishnrent behind it and a promising future looms under the new leader.

Since joining the faculty of Bucknell, Professor Gies has become an outstanding figure in local music circles. He attracted wide attention as the conductor of the Bach Festival, earning a deserved reputation for industry as well as ability.

Wilkes-Barre and Scranton may differ on many subjects, but not on their estimate of Professor Gies. There is logic in their agreement.