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## S.S. Huebner - The Bridge Builder

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A eulogy for Dr. S. S. Huebner, prepared by  
Davis W. Gregg for the September issue of  
the C.L.U. Journal.

### S. S. HUEBNER--THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Solomon Stephen Huebner, the teacher who changed an industry, was also a great bridge builder. He built a bridge of understanding between insurance and the public. He built a bridge of knowledge for insurance men and women to cross over the chasm of ignorance about the values of the insurance mechanism. He built a bridge of dignity from the commercialism of the early 20th century to the service-centered concept of professionalism a half century later. He built a bridge of cooperation between the academic community and the institution of insurance.

"An old man going on a lone highway,  
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned when safe on the other side  
And built a bridge, to span the tide."

The chasm Dr. Huebner saw as a young teacher was between the performance of the institution of insurance and its potential for service to mankind; between the needs of individuals, families, and businesses for informed insurance service, and the inability of most to provide that service. His bridge was knowledge and understanding. He knew that the institution would have to embrace real standards of knowledge, character, and ethical practice if it was to grow, prosper, and serve the public.

"'Old man,' said a fellow pilgrim near,  
'You are wasting your strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
You never again will pass this way;  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,  
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"

Dr. Huebner saw why the bridge must be built, and struggled against complacency and even opposition to accomplish his goals. Accepted by his academic colleagues as a great teacher and innovator, but privately ridiculed by many of them for devoting his talents to insurance, he fought with great conviction to make a place for insurance in higher education.

"The builder lifted his old gray head;  
'Good friend, in the path I have come,' he said,  
'There followed after me today  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been as naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"

It was the youth for whom the good Professor toiled--two and perhaps three generations of them have crossed his bridge. New generations now use his structure and march forward together as an institution of dignity and pride.

Our bridge builder has crossed to the other side. His job is done. The chasm will never again seem so vast and deep and wide. Our job goes on.

Davis W. Gregg