

CLASS OF



1888

## JAMES W. FOLEY, JR.

James W. Foley, Jr. (1874–1939) graduated from Bismarck High School in 1888. He was a member of the second class to graduate from the school.

Foley's family moved from Missouri to Fort Abraham Lincoln in 1878, where his father was stationed, just two years after General George Custer took charge at the Fort. When the senior Foley's enlistment ended, the family moved to Bismarck to take advantage of the educational opportunities Bismarck offered. The six Foley children and their mother remained in the city while their father accepted a position with the Marquis de Mores in Medora, North Dakota.

The writing career of Foley, Jr. began while he attended school at Fort Lincoln. He continued writing at Bismarck High, graduating at the age of 14. Foley's first book, *A Little Book of Prairie Breezes*, was published in 1902. The Bismarck High School yearbook, *Prairie Breezes*, was named after Foley's book.

Upon graduation, Foley spent a year in Medora and went on to attend the University of South Dakota for one year. His love for the Badlands drew him back to Medora where he wrote and published some of his literary works. Foley's style of writing impressed the publisher of *The Bismarck Tribune* and he was immediately hired as a reporter. Foley's work in the Badlands helped him acquire many friendships including that of the Marquis de Mores and President Theodore Roosevelt.

Foley was recognized nationally as a literary figure and as North Dakota's poet laureate. He is the author of the "North Dakota Hymn" which was adopted as the state song in 1947. The first public presentation of the "North Dakota Hymn" was at the Bismarck City Auditorium in 1927. Prior to his death, Foley published nearly a dozen volumes of verse and play, and authored numerous unpublished works as well.

