

William David McFarland

(24 Oct 1861 - 22 Jul 1909)

McFarland. On Thursday morning, July 22, 1909 at his residence, 616 A street s.e., William D., beloved husband of Mary Oulahan-McFarland. Funeral from St. Mark's Church, Third and A street s.e. on Saturday, July 24 at 3 p.m. Interment in Congressional cemetery.



William D. McFarland.

The Evening Star, July 22, 1909, p. 2

W.D. McFarland Dead

Eminent Vocalist Succumbs to Long Illness

Effect of An Accident

Suffered Injury While Bathing Months Ago

Leader in Musical Circles

Possessed Tenor Voice of Unusual Range and Endurance.

Which Won General Admiration

William D. McFarland died at the family residence, 616 A street southeast, at 3:30 o'clock this morning. The primary cause of his death was an accident which occurred while he was bathing months ago.

He began to fail rapidly several days ago, and it was feared that the end was not far away. He was conscious to the last and maintained his usual interest in everything that was transpiring.

Arrangements for the funeral are being made this afternoon.

In addition to his wife, a son and a little daughter survive him. The son is Walter R. McFarland of this city. He was a brother of Walter M. McFarland of Pittsburg, acting vice president of the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company, who resigned his commission in the navy to accept that position; Mrs. Helen M. Dunn of Pittsburg, widow of Dr. John Dunn of Washington; Mrs. Edmund Barry, wife of Dr. Edmund Barry of this city, and Mrs. E.C. Makowsky, wife of Rev. Dr. Makosky of Baltimore.

Position in Musical Circles

In musical circles Mr. McFarland occupied a unique position. To exceptional vocal endowments were added musical abilities of a high order. His voice was a vigorous tenor of unusual range, and the steadiness of his nerve and his endurance, both vocally and physically, attracted admiration at all times. It was often said, in comparing his singing with that of others that while some tenors could do certain things, Mr. McFarland could do all things in the singing line well.

He was a thoroughly conscientious singer, a fine soloist and a first tenor in male quartet work that left nothing to be desired according to the estimate of his associate vocalists. In a mixed quartet he was rated as first-class. Mr. McFarland's reliability as a singer was recognized by all in musical circles.

He had sung in all nearby cities and had toured as an oratorical singer to many cities as far as upper New York state. One of his most remarkable performances was his singing of the solo part in "The Light of Asia," practically at sight, which he did with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of the audience. On this occasion, which was several years ago, word was received during the morning rehearsal of the chorus on the day of the performance that the professional tenor who had been engaged to sing the solo part would be unable to appear, and Mr. McFarland was called out of his place in the chorus and told he would have to sing the solo part. With this short notice, it is said, he rendered the part in excellent style.

As a member of the Apollo quartet he appeared in Richmond and Lynchburg, Va.; Baltimore, Shippensburg, Pa., and other places, and contributed to the reputation gained by the quartet.

A Native of Washington

William D. McFarland was born in Washington, October 24, 1861. He was educated in the public schools, and early in life became prominent in singing circles. He was married to Miss Mary Oulahan, sister of Richard V. Oulahan, chief of the Washington bureau of the New York Sun.

He entered the railway mail service November 8, 1877, and by reason of his excellent clerical ability was soon assigned to the office of the general superintendent. He resigned December 17, 1889, to accept a position in the census office, then under the Department of the Interior, at the request of its officials, to assist in organizing the stationery division in connection with that office. He was quickly promoted and served in the stationery division of the census office until the work was completed. He resigned March 10, 1892, and the same day was reinstated in the railway mail service, and fourteen days later was transferred to the bureau of the second assistant postmaster general, where he has since been employed.

Highly Praised by Official Superior

John W. Hollyday, chief clerk of the office of the second assistant postmaster general, in a statement prepared for the Postmaster General, stated: "Mr. McFarland is a man of the best habits and of fine character. His every assignment has been upon work of an exceptionally high class. He has never failed to meet every demand upon him and the expectations of the officials under whom he has labored."

In his early life Mr. McFarland led the singing in the Sunday school of the Church of the Reformation and sang in its choir. He had sung in the best choirs of Washington for many years. For a long time he had been connected with the choir of the Calvary Baptist Church, the Washington Hebrew Congregation and the Church of the Covenant. Mr. McFarland was also a member of the noted Apollo Club and other musical organizations, and was for many years a prominent member of a Masonic quartet.

Prominent in Masonic Circles

He was a Mason, and widely known and highly esteemed in Masonic circles. He was made a Master Mason in B.B. French Lodge, No. 15, F.A.A.M., October 16, 1890; a Royal Arch Mason in Columbus Chapter, No. 1, June 6, 1896, and was knighted in Washington Commandery, No. 1, K.T., October 14, 1896. He was also a member of Almas Temple, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

Cause of Death

Some time ago, while bathing, Mr. McFarland ruptured a muscle, tendon or ligament in the back of his neck, at the base of the brain, causing him great distress and compelling his absence from his duties. For a long time the cause of the trouble was not known, and it was not until the latter part of February or the early part of March of the present year that his real trouble was discovered, March 10 he was taken to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore for an operation, and a tumor at the base of the brain was removed. His physicians at the time predicted his speedy recovery.

Intimate friends of Mr. McFarland said today that aside from his ability as a vocalist he was a man of fine ability, having a well trained mind and a capacity for work equaled by few.

In his personal life he was a man of lovable qualities and won the esteem and regard of all who came in contact with him. His domestic life was ideal and at all times he exhibited the warmest affection for his family and friends.

The Evening Star, July 25, 1909

Singer Laid to Rest

Funeral of William D. McFarland Held Yesterday Afternoon

Funeral services over the remains of William D. McFarland, who died Thursday morning at his home, 616 A street southeast, were held at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The services were conducted by Rev. W.L. Devries, rector of the church. The interment was in Congressional cemetery. The pallbearers were H.K. Simpson, William T. Galliher, Oscar Danzenbaker, J. Walter Humphrey, H.C. Pearson and Dana Holland.