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1937 Homecoming

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Pictured above: Bing Crosby visiting with Connee Boswell (of the famous Boswell Sisters singing group), and Dug Dykeman, at half-time at the Gonzaga - University of San Francisco football game. Gonzaga lost 7-0, though over 12,000 people attended the game.

Pictured Right: Bing Crosby performing at The Armory in front of 3,500 enthusiastic guests.

Paperclipping: Advertisement in the Spokesman-Review, October 27, 1937.



SEE! -- MEET! -- HEAR!

BING CROSBY

at His

HOME-COMING

With Bob Burns, Mary Carlisle, Edmund Lowe, Connie Boswell, Ken Carpenter, Jerry Bergin, Josephine Tuminia, Foursome Quartet, and Johnny Trotter's Orchestra.

DINE With the Stars

THURSDAY EVENING at Civic Auditorium,
8 p. m., \$5.00 per plate.

LAUGH With the Stars

FRIDAY EVENING, Stage Show at the Armory,
8 p. m., \$1, \$2, \$3.

DANCE With the Stars

SATURDAY EVENING at Natatorium Park, 9
p. m., Ladies \$1.00, Men \$1.50.

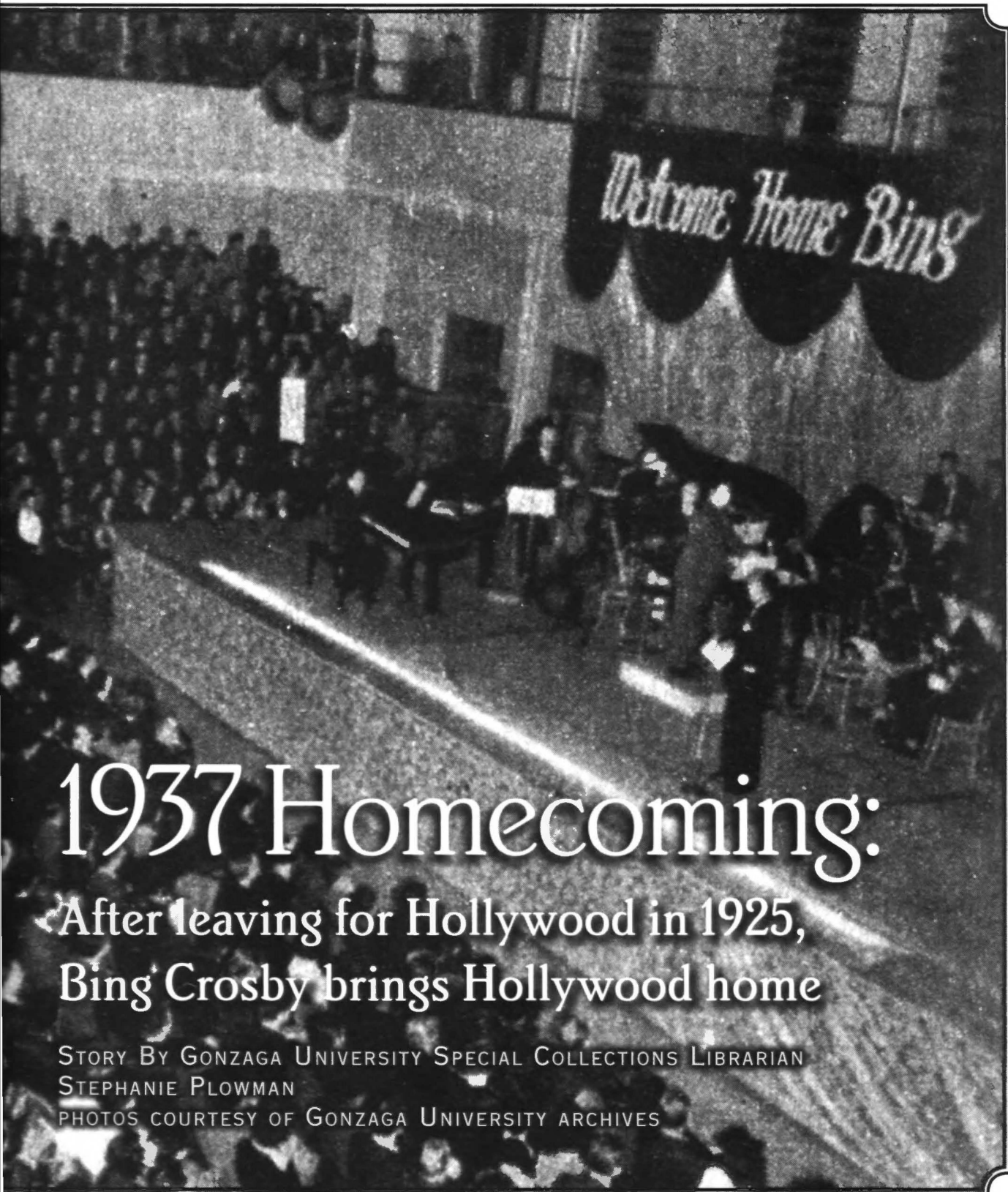
CHEER With the Stars

**GONZAGA-S. F. U.
FOOTBALL GAME**

SUNDAY AFTERNOON at Gonzaga Stadium, 2
p. m., \$1.15, \$1.75, \$2.50.

GET TICKETS NOW

Limited Seats available at Bing Crosby Headquarters,
427 Riverside. Call Main 3958 for reservations.



1937 Homecoming:

After leaving for Hollywood in 1925,
Bing Crosby brings Hollywood home

STORY BY GONZAGA UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN
STEPHANIE PLOWMAN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GONZAGA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

At half-time of the Gonzaga - San Francisco football game of 1937, The Gonzaga G Club presented Bing Crosby with a letterman's blanket, making him an honorary three-year letterman. Pictured here, Bing accepts this honor and addresses the crowd of over 12,000. He then led the crowd in the singing of Gonzaga's new fight song, written by Bob Burns.

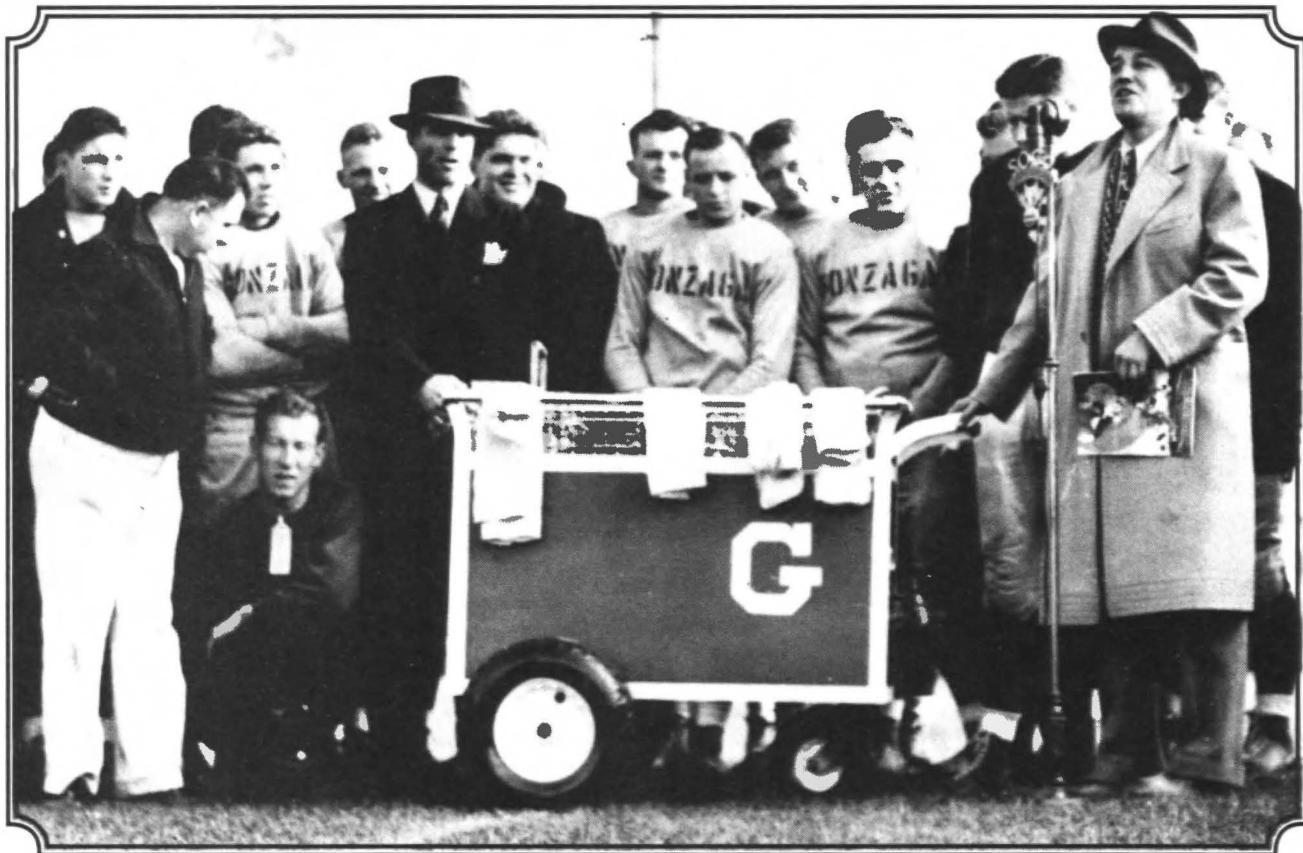




One of Gonzaga University's most famous alumnus is Bing Crosby. Although Bing left Spokane and Gonzaga in 1925 to begin a career in the entertainment industry, he never forgot his hometown or alma mater. He came back to Spokane on numerous occasions to help with local charities or see old friends. When he came on these visits he would bring family members, friends, and/or entertainers. He also invited his Spokane friends and Gonzaga students to visit Hollywood. In summary, Bing brought Hollywood to Spokane and Spokane to Hollywood.

Bing's first visit to Spokane after his 1925 departure occurred in October 21, 1937. Bing returned to his hometown and his alma mater to a warm welcome. An advertisement in the Spokesman Review dated October 20, 1937 with the headlines: "See! Meet! Hear! Bing Crosby at his Home-coming." Bob Burns, Mary Carlisle, Edmund Lowe, Connee Boswell, Ken Carpenter, Jerry Bergin, Josephine Tumminia, Foursome Quartet, and Johnny Trotter's Orchestra were listed as the visiting entertainers. "Dine with the Stars" on Thursday evening at the Civic Auditorium at 8:00 p.m. for \$5.00 a plate. "Laugh with the Stars" on Friday evening during a Stage Show at the Armory at 8:00 p.m. for \$1, \$2, \$3. "Dance with the Stars" on Saturday evening at Natatorium Park at 9:00 p.m. Ladies were charged \$1 and men at \$1.50. "Cheer with the Stars" at the Gonzaga versus San Francisco University Football game on Sunday afternoon at 2:00 at the Gonzaga Stadium, prices ranged from \$1.15 to \$2.30. The advertisement urged people to get their tickets now do due limited seating. Tickets were available through Bing Crosby Headquarters. Members of this homecoming committee included Joe Albi, Frank J. McKeivitt, Ed Wert, Rene Besse, Joseph Lavin, Bob Flynn, Nave Lein, and Leon J. Boyle.

During the four short days, Bing brought much to the city and Gonzaga. The headlines in the local paper on October 21, read "Spokane Welcomes Bing Crosby." After arriving by train at 7:00 a.m. Thursday morning, Bing went straight to Gonzaga for Mass. Afterwards, the University awarded him an honorary doctoral degree. After receiving his degree he thanked Gonzaga and Spokane for their support.



Bing Crosby presents a brand new water cart to the Gonzaga University football team before the beginning of their match with the University of San Francisco.

That afternoon at City Hall, the Spokane Mayor Frank Sutherlin presented Bing with the key to the city, and made him mayor for the four day visit. Bob Burns was made chief of police. The front page image of the Spokesman-Review on October 22, showed Bing holding the key with the caption: "Key to City of Spokane Present to Bing Crosby."

That night the Kraft Music Hall radio show was broadcast from the Masonic Temple in Spokane, with Connee Boswell, Mary Carlisle, and Edmund Lowe. A banquet for him and his costars was held at the Civic Auditorium following the broadcast.

The next evening Bing presided over a show at

the Spokane Armory in front of a crowd of 3,500. Afterwards he was the final judge for a talent contest at the Fox Theater. On Saturday night, he and his costars participated in a dance at Natatorium Park. All of these events were well attended and raised about \$10,000 for Gonzaga.

On Sunday afternoon, Bing attended the football game at Gonzaga Stadium between Gonzaga and San Francisco. His former classmate and now football coach, Mike Pecarovich, made him the assistant coach. Before the game started, Bing gave the football team a \$1,000 water cart. The local newspaper was quick to point out that Oregon is the only other team in the northwest to have such a cart. It was made



Above: Bing is made an honorary member of the Gonzaga Glee Club, presented by Joe Behrens.

Below: Bing visits with a little girl at the Shriner's Hospital.



of steel, galvanized pressure tank with eight spray showers, painted blue with a large white "G" on each side. The tray on top carried lemons, oranges, towels and water bottles. It rolled on balloon tires.

He watched from the sidelines with his entourage of movie stars he had brought with him. Gonzaga's football team lost, 7 to 0. More than 12,000 people were on hand to get a glimpse of Bing Crosby, Connee Boswell, and other entertainers. During halftime, the Gonzaga G club made Bing an honorary three-year letterman, giving him a blanket to mark his distinction. And then, Bing led the glee club in singing the new Gonzaga fight song written by Bob Burns. After the game, Bing left by rail back to Hollywood. At his insistence and without fanfare he paid all of the trip's expenses, around \$5,000, which included bringing his staff to Spokane. All proceeds from public events were to go to Gonzaga into a scholarship fund for students. ☞