

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
SAMUEL P. ELLISON, JR.**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution Samuel P. Ellison, Jr., Professor Emeritus of geology, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary  
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM  
SAMUEL P. ELLISON, JR.**

Dr. Samuel P. Ellison, Jr., professor emeritus and holder of the Alexander P. Deussen Professorship in Energy Resources in the Department of Geological Sciences, passed away on June 4, 1999, at the age of 84.

Sam arrived at UT in 1948 to begin teaching petroleum geology and general geology. These were subjects that he could make come alive. His own research interests were in conodont biostratigraphy, a field in which he was a respected leader. He became chairman in 1952 and for the next ten years he devoted his life to the improvement of the department and its resources.

Sam enjoyed teaching, both at the freshman level and in the advanced subjects of his specialties: micropaleontology and subsurface geology. One student who had completed his master's degree and then applied for a position with a company in the early '50s, was told "go back and take Professor Ellison's course in subsurface geology and we will hire you." Many students thought that his tests were hazardous because he gave information that had nothing to do with the question being asked. He expected the student to be able to pick out the pertinent information needed to answer the question!

In 1953, Sam founded the Geology Foundation, a vision that was realized by the donations of the many alumni and other friends of the department. The foundation has made it possible for many faculty and students to travel to meetings to report on research, some of which was also supported by the foundation. Endowed professorships and chairs, funded by donations to the foundation, have been instrumental in acquiring and retaining top faculty. All-in-all, Sam's Geology Foundation has been a strong influence in the development of the department into one with a world-class reputation. (Geology is still the only department at UT Austin that has its own foundation.) Friends and colleagues of the Geology Foundation Advisory Council established a fund in Sam's honor upon his retirement in 1979: the Samuel P. Ellison, Jr. Fund. Retirement for Sam really just meant the end of organized classes and committee responsibilities. He continued with his research and was willing to instruct anyone who would stop to listen.

After serving as department chairman, he continued to direct the Geology Foundation. In 1970, he became the acting dean of the newly organized College of Natural Sciences until the search committee found a permanent dean. He also served on many university committees, prominent ones being the Committee of Counsel on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (1968-1970) and the Energy Research Group (1972-1979), with earlier stints on university policy-making committees, including the Faculty Council, the Graduate Assembly (serving two years as chairman), and the Faculty Advisory Committee on Policy. Within the department he served several times as the faculty sponsor to the University Student Geological Society and Sigma Gamma Epsilon.

Sam served as secretary-treasurer of the Society of Exploration Mineralogists and Paleontologists for five years, as president in 1959, and was made an "Honorary Member" in 1975. In 1971, as a distinguished

lecturer of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), he spoke on “Geology of the Middle East.” The same year, he was honored by Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society, and he was awarded honorary membership in the Dad’s Association of the University of Texas. The next year he was elected vice president of AAPG. In June 1976 he taught a short course on conodonts at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Sam received several impressive awards in 1977: the G. H. Pander Gold Medal Award from the Pander Society and an AAPG Distinguished Service Award.

At Sam’s retirement dinner-dance, in spite of his objections, there were several speeches praising him for his contributions to the maturation of the geological sciences and university administration since his arrival in 1948. Steve Clabaugh outlined Sam’s efficient tenure as chairman and pointed out some significant achievements for which Sam was singularly accountable: for example, raising faculty salaries to an acceptable level for the first time in history, and realizing the need for, and then becoming the driving force behind, the concept of alumni support which culminated in the organization of the Geology Foundation. A. R. Schrank, then dean of the College of Natural Sciences, stated that Sam’s dedication to the elimination of mediocrity established the direction for the new college. Peter T. Flawn, then president of the University (and holder of the L. T. Barrow Professorship in Mineral Resources in the department) praised Sam for his strong support during Pete’s early career at the University and for his high level of cooperation during Pete’s directorship of the Bureau of Economic Geology. On behalf of the faculty of the geography department, George Hoffman presented Sam with a handsome certificate enumerating his role in the development of geography as a viable department at UT. Last, Sam received a clock from the department as a memento of the occasion.

Sam kept busy after retirement, writing a textbook on the “Geology of Texas” (unfortunately, never completed) and giving lectures at numerous universities. Possibly his proudest moment came when he gave the dedicatory address at his alma mater for the W. D. Keller Geology Auditorium at the University of Missouri. Walter Keller was Sam’s idol as an outstanding teacher/researcher.

Sam was born on July 1, 1914, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Samuel Porter and Mary Francis Edwards Ellison. He was raised in Raytown, Missouri. He graduated from high school in 1930 as valedictorian of his class. He earned his bachelor’s degree in geology from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and his master’s and PhD degrees from the University of Missouri at Columbia. While at the University, he met Dottie, who became his lifelong companion when they were married on June 9, 1940. He taught at the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy from 1939 to 1944. From 1944 to 1948 he was a geologist for Stanolind Oil and Gas Company in Midland and Wichita Falls, Texas.

Dr. Ellison is survived by his wife, Dottie Ellison of Round Rock, Texas, and his sons and daughters-in-law, Dave and Ruth Ellison of Englewood, Colorado, John and Sherri Ellison of College Station, Texas, and Steve and Kitsy Ellison of Georgetown, Texas. He is also survived by six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors William R. Muehlberger (chair), Earle F. McBride, and Keith P. Young.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on December 7, 1999. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under “Memorials” at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>