

IN MEMORIAM
OSCAR BERRY DOUGLAS

Oscar Berry Douglas was born at Munday, Texas; November 21, 1892, and died at his home in Austin on February 15, 1960. He was the son of Isaac Newton and Jessie Gwendolyn (Berry) Douglas, both now deceased. He is survived by his wife Etta Marie (Henderson); a grandson, Douglas Hirsch of Minot, N.D.; two brothers, Norman Douglas of Runge and Dr. Hollis Douglas of Denton; and one sister, Mrs. A. C. Foster of Haskell.

Dr. Douglas received a diploma from North Texas State College in 1914, the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Texas Christian University in 1920, the degree of Master of Arts from The University of Texas in 1924, and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1928. In his undergraduate study he completed a major in science and a minor in mathematics. In graduate study his major was educational psychology, the field to which he devoted most of his professional life, and his minors were psychology and philosophy. As was true of most of the doctors of his major interest at the time of his graduate study, he was broadly trained in the field of education. The breadth of his formal education and the richness of his public school experience were major assets in his distinguished career as a member of the faculty of the College of Education.

In 1914, at the age of twenty-one, he became Principal of the High School at Brandon, Texas. From 1915 to 1918 he was Principal of the High School at Coolidge. The next two years, 1918-20, he spent at Texas Christian University, and along with his study served as an Instructor in Physics. He returned to public school work in 1920 as a teacher in the Corsicana High School, and after one year became Principal. In 1923 he left this position to become a student at The University of Texas.

At the University his abilities were quickly recognized, and he became a tutor in the Philosophy of Education in 1923, and an Instructor in 1924. From this beginning he steadily rose in rank and responsibility, becoming Adjunct Professor (the former title of Assistant Professor) in

Educational Psychology in 1928, Associate Professor in 1936, Professor in 1942, and Chairman of the Department in 1948. Preceded in that position only by Professor A. Caswell Ellis and Professor C. T. Gray, he was departmental chairman for a ten-year period, terminated by the sixty-five year age limitation placed upon departmental chairmen. During the year 1927-28 he served as Associate Professor of Education at Duke University, and for eight consecutive years beginning in 1930 taught in the Duke University summer school at least part of the session.

Within the general field of educational psychology, Dr. Douglas developed two specialties. The first was in the psychology of reading, a field of interest, which he cultivated, in his graduate work in the University of Chicago, where he was a General Education Board fellow. The second was in the field of developmental psychology. Honored by a grant from the Commission on Teacher Education, of the American Council on Education, he was a member of a postdoctoral group studying under the leadership of Professor Daniel Prescott at the University of Chicago in the year 1940-41. The next year at The University of Texas he was given the additional budgetary title of Consultant in Child Development.

The professional organization of which Dr. Douglas was a member include, among others, Phi Delta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi, Texas State Teachers Association (life member), National Education Association, Texas Psychological Association, Southwest Psychological Association and American Psychological Association (a fellow since 1950). He is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the South and and American Men of Science.

His contributions to research were mainly through his students, forty-four of whom received advanced degrees under his direction. He was a member of the Graduate Faculty and for a number of years was Graduate Adviser for the Department of Educational Psychology. He wrote with high quality and excellent style; but he was primarily a teacher and, as opportunity came to him, an administrator. His was a rare combination of teaching and administrative skill. He spent a great deal of time advising with students and, after becoming Chairman of the Department, with junior members of the staff. He was a very tolerant man, able to see the other fellow's point of

view, and at the same time one who could make and carry out administrative decisions. Under his leadership as Chairman, the Department of Educational Psychology greatly expanded both in faculty and in research and teaching. At the close of the first year, his dean characterized his accomplishment as "nothing short of miraculous."

Through the years Dr. Douglas had many important assignments within the University. Among the committees and faculty groups on which he served at various times were the Graduate Council, the Graduate Legislative Council, the University Library Committee, the Committee on Psychology and Educational Psychology, the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Executive Council of the College of Education. In 1957 he was Chairman of the Committee on Graduate Studies in Education.

His professional services reached beyond the campus in extension teaching, in consultation, and in professional addresses. Examples of these services are his conduct of a reading clinic at Tyler, his participation in in-service training programs at Laredo, Abilene, and Midland, and his work as educational adviser of Texas College at Tyler.

Probably his most influential publication, which incidentally reflects his basic interest in teaching, is the textbook, which he published in collaboration with Dr. B. F. Holland, Fundamentals of Educational Psychology (Macmillan, 1938). Other publications include articles in professional journals, a chapter in Skinner's Readings in Educational Psychology, workbooks for students of educational psychology, and textbooks for the elementary grades. From 1936 to 1940 he was a reviewer for the American Journal of Psychology. At one time he was a member of a National Curriculum Committee for Religious Education.

The life of Dr. Douglas found expression beyond academic walls. His chief avenue for local community service was in the Central Christian Church and later in the University Christian Church. For many years he was the teacher of a Sunday school class, which honored him with the name, the O. B. Douglas class. In fact, he taught that class on the Sunday before his sudden death early Monday morning. His business and administrative abilities were capitalized in his

membership on the Board of Trustees and by his chairmanship of the Building Committee when the new sanctuary of the University Christian Church was constructed. He served for many years also as a member of the Board of Trustees of his alma mater Texas Christian University.

Dr. Douglas was a "home" man, and a very practical man. He found much of his recreation doing repair work and otherwise caring for his residence and for other living units, which he owned. His work, manual or professional, was well organized and thorough. He had a marked capacity to analyze a situation and proceed to a solution. Nothing stayed long on his desk. His dress as a professor or a workman was always a model of order and neatness.

He was a man of great emotional poise and strength. He was forceful and effective in debate, but always poised and free from personal involvement. In every circle he was a tower of strength. Yet he himself was not unacquainted with disappointment and sorrow. The tragic experience which came to him and Mrs. Douglas in the death of their only daughter was a shattering blow, but his strength through all of that is beautifully symbolized in the stained glass window, The Great Teacher, of the University Christian Church, given in memory of their daughter.

In the language of the West, Dr. Douglas died "with his boots on." In spite of failing health in the last several months, he was again at his desk, at the opening of the current semester. He was confident of the future, even planning a European trip for next summer. Although it was known that his health had not been good, his death came as a great shock to his family, his friends, his students, and his colleagues. His work was finished a little ahead of schedule but it was well done. He will be memorialized by a University Loan and Scholarship Fund, which is being established in his honor. In a real sense the University itself is a memorial, for he helped substantially to build it. As with all great teachers his best memorial is his students, and they are in great number, whose imagination has been quickened, whose intellect has been sharpened, and whose ideals have been strengthened through his life and work.

Special Committee

Glenn E. Barnett
Hugh C. Blodgett
Herschel T. Manuel, Chairman

Filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty by Professor Glenn E. Barnett, member of the Special O. B. Douglas Memorial Resolution Committee, March 11, 1960.

Distributed among the members of the General Faculty by the University Stenographic Bureau, April 4, 1960.