IN MEMORIUM

CARL JOHN ECKHARDT

Carl John Eckhardt was born October 28, 1902 in Yorktown, Texas, the son of Carl John and Pauline Zedler Eckhardt. He attended elementary school at Yorktown and then moved to Main Avenue and Brackenridge High School in San Antonio, Texas. After high school, he came to Austin to attend The University of Texas in 1920 and worked toward a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering degree, which he received in 1925. Carl soon made friends with Byron Short, and these two essentially spent their lifetime working together for The University of Texas. While working as an instructor in Mechanical Engineering, he completed his M.S. in Mechanical Engineering degree in 1930.

Professor Eckhardt's industrial experience included work as a boiler fireman at M.O. Rayor in Luling, Texas, and as an engineer at Westinghouse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1925-1926). He also spent a brief time (summer 1928) as an efficiency engineer at the Central Power and Light Company in south Texas. Experience gained from these years of work for the power industry permeated the rest of his career and provided the background necessary for a lifetime of work in this field. Texas lignite was one of his favorite subjects after he researched deeply into its use as a fuel for power plants and heating. Since it was used as a fuel in the UT power plant, he had access to a wealth of data to support his claim for increased use of lignite. At the time of his retirement in 1973 he probably knew more about Texas lignite than anyone else and had published many papers on its potential use.

Professor Eckhardt thoroughly enjoyed a lifetime of teaching and service. During the period 1926-1930 he was a Mechanical Engineering Instructor; from 1930-1935 he was an Adjunct Professor while he also served as Superintendent of Power Plants. He became a Professor of Mechanical Engineering in 1936 and was soon appointed to the very demanding position as Superintendent of Utilities (1937-1950), followed by the position of Director of the Physical Plant from 1950 to 1970. Throughout all of his administrative career, he continued to serve the Mechanical Engineering Department in many ways, including the teaching of his favorite course, ME 371, Engineering Contracts and Specifications. Most of his old students have forgotten the course content years ago, but they all remember his "thought for the day," which was given at the end of each lecture. At the end of one such lecture, a student rushed to catch Professor Eckhardt to inquire as to where he found such a profound statement. Professor

Eckhardt quietly answered, "the Bible." In 1973 he was recognized as Professor Emeritus, and he continued to come to campus and work on his writings for many more years through September, 1994. President Peter T. Flawn selected Professor Eckhardt as the 1980 recipient of the Presidential Citation. President Lorene Rogers created this award to recognize UT Austin alumni who have made outstanding contributions to the University and whose exemplary lives and careers have brought honor to the institution.

The honor societies that recognized his outstanding achievements were Tau Beta Pi, Pi Tau Sigma, Sigma Xi, and Phi Kappa Phi. He never failed to show his great appreciation to each of these organizations. He belonged to a number of professional societies, namely, The American Society for Engineering Education, The American Association for the Advancement of Science (Fellow), and The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, where he also was elected to the Fellow grade in 1955 and Life Fellow membership followed. He was a registered professional engineer (serial number 115) and supported this profession by memberships in both the Texas and the National Society of Professional Engineers.

When those that knew him well tried to characterize him they would always come up with expressions such as, "a true professor from the old school," or "very polite gentleman," or "elegant speaker." He loved to research history with a gifted talent of expression and understanding that brought out many unrecorded facts and expressions. Publications came easily to him because he enjoyed the opportunity to express himself with his creative writing and extraordinary vocabulary.

His publication record includes ten books or booklets and more than 130 other publications. Many of these publications were of the ASME (The American Society of Mechanical Engineers). As the Director of the Physical Plant at UT, his perspective on life broadened as reflected in his writings on the philosophical aspects of teaching and life in his books, *These Things Will I Remember, Paths to an Abundant Life, Straight Furrow, Prayers to Live By,* and *On and On.* He also wrote extensively about The University in *Lest I Forget the Richness of My Heritage, Fifty Stars in the University Firmament, Fifty Who Loved and Served The University of Texas at Austin, On This Hallowed Ground, Facts and Stories About Fifty Golden Years at The University of Texas*, and *The Directory of Outdoor Statuary.*

As with many great professional men, Professor Eckhardt's accomplishments far exceeded those recorded in our historical files. An example is taken as an excerpt from *Commitment to Excellence: One Hundred Years of Engineering Education at The University of Texas at Austin* (1986).

> Professor Eckhardt designed and supervised construction of the maces carried in the commencement procession. The College of Engineering mace, for example, bears the rams horn and is topped with a brass miniature Alec. Much of the wood from which they are made came from campus buildings and landmarks that have been demolished. Also Professor Eckhardt oversaw the installation of bronze plaques in each building on campus recording their history and the contribution of their namesake. With Walter P. Webb, he erected the original Santa Rita oil rig on the campus in Austin, where it was dedicated in a ceremony before the kickoff of the game with Texas A&M on Thanksgiving Day, 1958. The mechanical engineering laboratories produced Smokey, the cannon fired when Texas scores in its football games. If The University wins, the triumph is memorialized by a "victory light" display devised by Professor Eckhardt using the tower of the main building.

Other significant accomplishments would include: the organization of UT's Physical Plant Department, the plans now being used for the control of parking and traffic, plans and supervision of the construction of the Erle Stanley Gardner study in the Academic Center, and the promotion of annual Service Awards Program that recognizes the University's non-teaching personnel. Also, he catalogued a list of 75-100 kinds of trees on the UT campus complete with color photographs.

Professor Eckhardt's accomplishments included a number of offices in the professional societies that he diligently supported. A partial list would include Chairman of the South Texas Section of ASME, 1945-1946, Chairman, Committee on Student Selection and Guidance, Engineer's Council for Professional Development, New York, 1945-1948, and Vice President of ASME Region VIII, 1948-1952. He was honored with Fellow grade membership and six different Certificates of Award from The American Society of Mechanical Engineers. In 1984, The University of Texas Board of Regents approved the creation of the **Carl J. Eckhardt**

Fellowship in Mechanical Engineering through the Centennial Teachers and Scholars Matching Program.

As an Elder in the University Presbyterian Church he performed many tasks including early arrival to check the furnace and air conditioning to make certain everyone would be comfortable. As a man of faith, he recorded many experiences in his writings.

He married Florence Worley Kirkpatrick in 1927 and had one son, John William Eckhardt, and one daughter, Mary Jane Eckhardt. Florence died in 1958, and he later married Moyne Diane Treat in 1962. Professor Eckhardt died on June 29, 1995.

Robert M. Berdahl, President
The University of Texas at Austin

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors H. Grady Rylander (Chair), Reuben H. Barr, Jr., and Howard E. Brown.