IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS LEA ELLIS

Thomas Lea Ellis, Assistant Professor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, died May 20, 1973. He is survived by his wife, Billie Faye Ellis, his daughter, Deborah Lea Ellis, his two sons, Bill Martin Ellis and Mike Thomas Ellis, all of Austin, and his mother, Mrs. Harry M. Ellis, Cleveland, Tennessee.

The only son of Harry M. Ellis and Flossie Ellis, Tom was born on January 20, 1924 at Cleveland, Tennessee, where he grew up and attended public school.

In three years at Bradley High School, Tom demonstrated those scholarly qualities and athletic capabilities that had such a strong effect upon his future career as a teacher and athletic coach. He earned a total of nine varsity letters in football, basketball and baseball. He played quarterback on a football team with a 22-1 win-loss record his junior and senior years. He was elected football team captain for the senior year. He was a leading scorer on the basketball team which won the Tennessee State Championship during his senior year of participation. He served as class president during his junior and senior years and was president of the Hi-Y Association, an honor club for boys.

Graduation from high school was followed by three years of military service with the U. S. 14th Air Force in China. Tom was honorably discharged on Christmas Eve of 1945. Following his release from military

service, Tom attended McMurry College, Abilene, Texas, where he received the B.S. degree in 1948. As an undergraduate at McMurry, his was an outstanding academic and athletic record. He participated in football, basketball and baseball, and was quarterback of the football team which won the Texas Conference Championship in his senior year of participation. He was a member of the Indian Head Association, a lettermen's association, and the IHR, a social club for promotion of better citizenship among students, and in his senior year was elected Chief McMurry, the highest honor accorded male students at McMurry College. Tom continued his academic work at McMurry and received the M.A. degree in Education in 1952.

Tom's professional teaching and coaching career began at Winters, Texas High School where he taught mathematics and served as head basketball coach and assistant football coach. In 1951 he was appointed to the head basketball coaching position at Merkel, Texas, High School, where his team won two district championships and advanced through the regional championship in The University of Texas Interscholastic League Basketball Playoff in 1954.

Marked success as a high school coach and demonstrated ability as a leader in his profession led to an appointment as football line coach at his Alma Mater in 1955. As assistant football coach at McMurry, Tom Ellis contributed to the rebuilding of an athletic program which had experienced many setbacks since the days of his graduation. In 1956 he was promoted to the head football coaching position and in three years achieved an outstanding won-lost record with a national ranking of 9th among small college football powers in 1959. He was named Texas College Coach of the Year in 1959 and coached the Texas All Star Team in the Oil Bowl Classic during that

Summer. Under his leadership at McMurry, the athletic program developed a basketball program that received national recognition and the track program was recognized as among the best in small colleges. Because of his coaching talents and leadership ability, Tom won high respect from persons in the academic and athletic community; he developed a close liaison between administration, faculty and the athletic department. He was particularly sensitive to the role of responsibility a football coach has in the community. Tom was active in the religious life of McMurry College, and in the community affairs of Abilene. His style, however, was such that it was not possible to elicit from him any claims to his many accomplishments in developing the athletic programs and the impact he had on community affairs.

In 1960, Tom Ellis moved to Texas A&M University as assistant football coach and remained there through the 1962 football season.

He accepted the position of assistant football coach at Oklahoma State University in 1963 and remained there for three years. In 1966, Tom returned to the Southwest Conference as a member of the coaching staff at The University of Texas at Austin, where he served as assistant football coach during the time The University of Texas held the nation's longest winning record, won three conference championships, and was ranked first in the Nation among major university football powers.

Tom's coaching career came to a premature end early in 1970 because of heart disease. He remained at The University of Texas, however, and accepted a teaching and administrative position in the Department of Physical Education where he made a valuable and unique contribution.

Tom always gave unselfishly of his time and effort. He was a man of great personal charm. His efficiency, honesty, enthusiasm, friendliness, and devotion to principle are the qualities which students and associates recognized in him and for which he was greatly admired.

Tom's personal interests were varied and many. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge; he was active in the Methodist Church. He enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was an excellent golfer and spent much time with his sons, teaching them the game. Tom was very close to his family and he enjoyed most doing things with them, which enriched their lives.

Tom Ellis was a devoted Christian and those who knew him best knew that he cared about others. His passing has saddened our hearts.

Lorene L. Rogers

Lorene L. Rogers, President Ad Interim
of The University of Texas at Austin

James L. Kinneavy

James L. Kinneavy, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Stan Burnham(chairman), Mary Lou LeCompte and Charles Craven.