IN MEMORIAM

J. FRANK ELSASS

J. Frank Elsass was born in Waynesburg, Ohio, in 1913. He began the study of trumpet at an early age and distinguished himself as an instrumentalist even during his high school years.

After graduating in 1934 from the Ernest Williams School of Music in New York, he was engaged as a teacher there, a remarkable tribute for a person of his age. Subsequently he attended New York University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in music in 1938 and a Master of Arts degree in music in 1939. In 1940 he accepted a position at San Jose State College in California and while there also directed the Stanford University Band in Palo Alto for a year. Military service in the Navy intervened during the years 1942-45, but the next year he resumed his studies at the University of Michigan and served as a Teaching Fellow there.

In 1943 he married Helen Cecilia Schmoyer of Boyertown, Pennsylvania, an accomplished singer, pianist, and organist, who later went to North Texas State University in Denton to teach voice and pursue a Master of Music degree. They have two sons, Arthur William, born in 1949, and Gilbert Roy, born in 1952, as well as four grandchildren.

In 1947 Dr. Elsass taught a summer session at The University of Texas and was then persuaded by Dean E. W. Doty to return on a full-time basis in 1948. He taught trumpet, cornet, and on occasion, French horn. Later he pursued doctoral work here and received the Doctor of Education degree in 1956. From 1955 to 1965 he was the conductor of the University Symphonic Band. However, his interests were not confined to brass instruments or to band directing; his concern for the whole program of the College of Fine

Arts was exemplified by the generous way in which he gave his time and talents to the conducting of musicals staged by the Drama Department. His contributions helped to make these productions high points in the presentations of contemporary American musical theatre on the campus from 1965 to 1973.

As a performer, Dr. Elsass first became widely known during the period 1934-40, when he was a cornet soloist with the world-renowned Goldman Band in New York City and on radio programs broadcast by CBS and NBC. (He had the distinction of being the youngest soloist to perform with that group up to that time.) He also held the post of first trumpet player with the Barrère Little Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra in New York, and later, the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to the conducting activities already mentioned, there were others: he served as Associate Conductor of the band at the Ernest Williams School of Music and of the band and orchestra at San Jose State College, and also as conductor at several summer music camps.

During the more than three decades that he taught at the University he trained scores of undergraduate and graduate students who are now active in high school and college programs or who perform in professional symphony orchestras or other musical organizations throughout the country. Furthermore, many of these students were initially attracted to the University through the brass clinics that Dr. Elsass gave or through conducting appearances he made. By means of his teaching skills and his consummate artistry, he was able to transform entering players of limited experience and musical perception into accomplished musicians capable of playing the brass literature with finesse and mature understanding. In gratitude, many of them corresponded with him throughout his life.

In addition to being a gifted teacher, he was an exceptionally effective advisor to students, assisting them in making wise choices in connection with their musical careers and counseling them on personal matters that were basic to their future success. His expertise as a teacher of brass instruments was shared with others through some 23 articles, most of which appeared in "The Southwestern Musician" and "Texas Music Educator." Upon his retirement from the University, he was appointed Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Elsass was elected to membership in the American Bandmasters' Association, Kappa Kappa Psi (national honorary band fraternity), and Pi Kappa Lambda (honorary music fraternity), honors he richly deserved. Other organizations to which he belonged included the American Association of University Professors, Free and Accepted Masons, Music Educators' National Conference, Omicron Delta Kappa (of which he was a charter member), Phi Delta Kappa (national education fraternity), the Texas Band Directors' Association, the Texas Music Educators' Association, the College Band Directors' National Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia (national music fraternity), for which he served as a Province Governor for many years, and the Rotary Club of Austin. This last organization and the First English Lutheran Church, of which he was an active member, were his two major community concerns. His comprehensive Christian commitment and the many ways in which he exemplified the Rotary goal of "Service Above Self" were evident to all who knew him.

An individual's life is often summed up by an account of his accomplishments; but more important is the manner in which these were achieved, the question of who was affected by the life, and its net result. Dr. Elsass had a zest for living, compassion for his fellow man, a sense of dignity and beauty, and a high degree of sensitivity. He derived great satisfaction from his work and that of his students. Not only did his

appointment as soloist of the outstanding Goldman Band in New York City after graduation from the Ernest Williams School of Music serve as an inspiration to his peers and his students, his ability to place such early success in proper perspective was an example to those around him.

In his teaching, his honest values and dedication to his work became the model for the growth of his students. They will carry through their lives the lessons he taught, in his studio and in his conducting activities.

Dr. Elsass's retirement was necessitated by a progressive illness that eluded analysis. He faced those years with unbelievable courage and patience. His inspirational qualities and his care for those dear to him never diminished. His life enriched everything it touched.

Peter T. Flawn, 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 Kent Kennan (chairman), Richard Blair, Raymond Crisara, Professor Emeritus E. William Doty, and Professor Emeritus James W. Moll.