IN MEMORIAM

STANLEY P. FINCH

Professor Emeritus Stanley P. Finch of the Department of Civil Engineering, after a short illness, died in Austin on January 9, 1972, at the age of 90.

Professor Finch was born in Austin October 10, 1881, the son of Howell Mallory Finch and Mary Stanley Finch. Graduating from Austin High School in 1898, he entered the University of Texas that same year, majoring in languages. He received his B.A. degree in 1902.

Mr. Finch reentered the University in 1903 to study civil engineering in the Department of Engineering which was then just developing under the guidance of Professor T. U. Taylor. (The title of Dean came in 1906.) At that time the other faculty in civil engineering consisted of Mr. E. C. H. Bantel, then an instructor, and Mr. R. A. Thompson, a lecturer. The entire university was small enough to permit inclusion of the complete roster of students in each annual catalog. In 1904 the Department of Engineering first occupied the new Engineering Building (now the Speech Building). In 1905, Mr. Finch received his degree of Civil Engineer.

Professor Taylor immediately added Mr. Finch to his faculty as an instructor in civil engineering, bringing that faculty to a total of four. At Professor Taylor's suggestion Mr. Finch spent the summer of 1906 at the University of Wisconsin doing special work in their hydraulic

laboratory. In 1908, Mr. Finch was given a year's leave of absence to study at M.I.T. He received his M.S. degree there in June 1909, specializing in hydraulics.

With the exception of this year in the East, Professor Finch taught continuously at the University from 1905 until his retirement in 1952, a teaching period of 45 years. He became an adjunct professor in 1913, associate professor in 1919, and a professor in 1923. In 1917, Professor Finch again spent the summer working in the hydraulics laboratory at the University of Wisconsin. Over the years he kept in touch with northern and eastern universities, making many trips to inspect their curricula and their work.

Professor Finch served as Chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering from 1937 to 1943 and was Director of the Bureau of Engineering Research from 1927 to 1938. He was appointed a member of the original Graduate Faculty when this body was organized during Dr. Splawn's administration.

During his long period on the faculty, Professor Finch at one time or another served on nearly all the College committees and on many of the University committees. He was a conscientious committee member and his committee work was highly respected. He chaired many of the most controversial committees in a way which satisfied everyone. The College of Engineering particularly recalls his effective work with the Engineering Building Committee, including the depression days during which the "new" engineering building (now Taylor Hall) was planned and constructed.

Professor Finch handled administrative duties well and his leadership in the department Budget Council helped build the base for the present national reputation of civil engineering at the University of Texas.

But teaching was the work which Professor Finch liked most and in which he really excelled. His early interest was in hydraulics, as indicated earlier, but in a small faculty he was very flexible in the courses he handled. As a specialist in the hydraulics area became available, Professor Finch willingly shifted more to strength of materials and structures.

Professor Finch had an unusual ability to analyze a problem and resolve it in terms of its fundamentals. His presentations in class were models of clarity, devoid of distracting matter not essential to a clear understanding. He taught his students to think for themselves by assigning daily problems. He knew from experience that a student could not learn structural analysis without working problems regularly. He was available in his office most of the day, always open to students who needed help. He insisted that problems be turned in on time. If he then checked a problem as incorrect, that problem had to be corrected and brought into his office again--and maybe again--until correct. He required a notebook at the end of the course containing a complete set of corrected problems.

Memorizing past problem solutions was not what he sought from his students. Quiz problems always involved a new variation which required a basic understanding. While everyone regarded him as patient with

students who tried, some regarded him as very strict. Many of the latter came back, after a few years in engineering, to thank him for insisting on clear thinking.

Professor Finch joined the American Society of Civil Engineers the year he started teaching and became a Fellow in 1959. He was active in the Texas Section (ASCE) and the Austin Branch. He was a charter member of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers and the national society NSPE. He was a long time member of AAUP and Sigma Xi, and an honorary member of Chi Epsilon (1935).

Professor Finch married Miss Emily Rice on July 14, 1927. They had two children:

Emily Anne Finch, now Mrs. Richard R. McKay of Houston

Howell Mallory Finch, a prominent attorney in Austin.

Professor Finch is survived by his wife, his children, and a number of grandchildren.

Stephen H. Spurr

Stephen H. Spurr
President of the University of Texas at Austin

Forest G. Hill

Forest G. Hill
Secretary of the General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Phil M. Ferguson, Chairman, Byron E. Short and J. Neils Thompson.