EDWARD JACKSON MATHEWS

Edward Jackson Mathews, son of I. P. and Martha Wall Mathews, was born October 21, 1878, and died after a very brief illness May 31, 1964, at the age of 85 years, 7 months, and 10 days. He is survived by his widow, Ravenna Wakefield Mathews; three children, Ravenna (Mrs. Henry Nelson), Edward Jackson, Jr., and Reed Wakefield; two sisters, Mrs. Wallace Carroll and Miss Bernice Mathews; and three grandchildren.

Although born in Alabama he came to Texas with his family at an early age and grew up in Waller County amid the hardships of rural life in the period following the war between the states. His formal education began in a country school and continued in the Hempstead High School, from which he graduated in 1896. Six years later he graduated from Toby's Business College in Waco. He entered The University of Texas in January, 1907, and was in continuous attendance until June, 1910, when he received the B. A. degree. He then worked toward the LL.B. degree and was about half through the course when he was offered the position of Registrar at the University. His acceptance of this position in 1911 set the course for the rest of his life, a half century of distinguished service to education. At intervals beginning in 1915 he engaged in graduate study in the University and received the M. A. degree in 1918, presenting a thesis entitled, "The Correlation of High School and College Courses in the Sciences." The thesis was published as University Bulletin No. 1838, issued as he modestly noted in one of his reports "while I was in the War and had no connection with publications."

On June 5, 1934, Mr. Mathews received from Southwestern University the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Mr. Mathews remained a bachelor until Ravenna Wakefield, a charming young teacher of French, came to the University. They were married on July 29, 1922. From that time his family became one of his major interests. He carefully noted
on official records first his marriage, then the birth of his lovely daughter, and then the birth of the twin boys. On one of the routine Reports to the Office of the President, conspicuously lacking in other data, he ignored all the blanks and wrote at an angle across the print: "Last report 1929. Nothing happened since except the arrival, on June 6, 1929, of twin boys." In recent years his grandchildren also have had a warm place in his affections.

After graduating from high school in 1896, Mr. Mathews spent six years as a teacher in the public schools, the last year of this period as superintendent of schools at Salado. Then with the assistance of the business college course to which reference was made in a preceding paragraph, he turned to business, serving as bookkeeper for a Waco concern from 1903 to 1906.

Edward Jackson Mathews had a long and distinguished career in the service of The University of Texas, beginning as an assistant to the Registrar in 1907. He held the position of President's Stenographer (this is the official record) in 1908 and Secretary to the President from 1909 to 1911. Then came his big chance: in 1911 he became Registrar of the University and also Secretary of the Board of Regents. He began his service as Registrar with one part-time assistant. But the University grew and his duties multiplied. In 1914 he was made Assistant Dean of the College of Arts. He carried the three major responsibilities for about ten years and then, with the growing complexity of the University, gave up his position as Secretary of the Board of Regents. Until 1935 he served in the dual capacity of Registrar and Assistant Dean, but again the increasing size of the University and the increasing specialization of the staff caught up with him, and he was made Registrar and Dean of Admissions. At the time of this change, the Board of Regents recorded their commendation of his "faithful service over a long period of years." In the summer session of 1936 and again of 1938 he taught a course in the College of Education, "Some Functions and Problems of College Registrars." In
1949 he reached the age for retirement from full activity and was transferred to "modified service with vote" and given the title, Dean of Admissions, Emeritus. He continued in this status until 1959, when he was fully retired. But he still maintained an office and served the University until his death.

His contribution to educational administration outside the University of Texas was noteworthy. His wisdom and industry were widely sought and widely used. In 1916 he was Secretary of the College Section of the State Teachers Association and read the report which culminated in the organization of the Association of Texas Colleges. From 1916 to 1938 he was an active member of the Committee on Standards and Classification of the Association and twice served as President of the Association, 1921-22 and 1938-39. W. B. McDaniel, Vice-President of McMurry College, who has been Secretary of the Association for many years, pays this tribute:

"All of us who knew him during his active days remember him as a most influential and diligent representative of the University of Texas and yet one who was kind, considerate, and eager to help any young person who was a beginner in the field of college administration."

Mr. Mathews was one of the founders of the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers and served twice as President, 1929-30 and 1933-34.

His professional interests and activities extended to national and regional affairs. In 1914 he was the fourth President of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, and in 1926 President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. He served many years as a member of the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Southern Association and in 1929 was its chairman. In 1936 and 1937 he was a member of the Association's Central Reviewing Committee for Private Secondary Schools, and in 1941 and 1942 served as a leader in the Work Conference of the Southern Association at Sewanee, Tennessee.
Although Mr. Mathews was primarily an administrator rather than a writer, his contributions in addresses and publications should not be overlooked. Much of his writing, it is true, is buried in committee reports and in official publications, but it is none the less important. Some of the addresses and papers to which reference can be made are the following:

"Campaign Expenses," a paper written in 1909 while he was still an undergraduate student winning the William J. Bryan prize for the best paper on good government.

His M. A. thesis, already listed.


A paper on "The Registrar and the Dean of Men" read before the National Association of Deans and Advisers of Men in 1937 and included in the following issue of the Proceedings.

An address to the Conference of Foreign Student Advisers in Cleveland, Ohio, under the auspices of the Institute of International Education, 1942.

Mr. Mathews was twice enrolled in war service. He was a "soldier" in the Spanish-American War, Co. C. 2nd TVI. During the First World War in the summer of 1918 he attended an SATC Training Camp at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, and in the same year was Assistant Educational Director, District 10, SATC.

In community life his roots ran deep. He was a member of the Scholia Club and once served as its "Factotum." From 1926 to 1928 he was President of the University Faculty Club, then in its period of greatest activity. He was a 32nd Degree Mason, Scottish Rite Order. But the area of his greatest activity outside of his home and his profession was the church. He joined the First Baptist Church of Austin, January 13, 1907, and remained an active and loyal member until his death. He was elected a deacon in 1923 and served the Church through the years in various other positions of leadership. For several years he was Superintendent of the Sunday School, and for 26 years—even to the very day of his death—teacher of the Business Men's Bible Class.

Dr. Carlyle Marney, former minister of the First Baptist Church, gave the committee an appreciative statement from which two excerpts are quoted, one suggesting the energy and enthusiasm of youth and the other the flowering of age.

"E.J. Mathews came to the University of Texas in [1907], and to the First Baptist Church ... the first Sunday he was in town. He never left either institution and still remains a powerful memory and influence in both .... From older friends who remembered, I learned that his first student days in Austin saw him active in YMCA [and in] all Youth groups, a young Church School teacher, and a deacon soon after his employment began at UT. From youth the word seems to have been integrity-with-regularity. If Mathews voted for anything it was fair—you could count on that.
"In his 70's he came close to being a 'free' man in religion; where one might have expected a Conservative set of opinions, he was only careful of genuine fundamentals. He was more than a Liberal--he approached freedom in every important area.... He became an extra-ordinarily competent theologian of the Old Testament....

"... he was the moving spirit in any opening move at our Church. In 1963 he alone had influence to move First Baptist Church to integration. But this spirit had been twenty years flowering in him.... The warmth and flow of his correspondence in the 80's reveals a man still being made."

Three colleges have recognized the work of Mr. Mathews in a very special way. The first has already been noted, the granting of the honorary LL.D. degree by Southwestern University in 1934. The second was a citation from Our Lady of the Lake College at the celebration of its Golden Jubilee in 1948. The citation read in part:

"Who ... has exercised a determining influence on the educational development of the state of Texas and of the whole nation; who from his influential position has consistently advanced and developed high standards for all institutions of higher education; and who, most importantly for Our Lady of the Lake College, has assisted it, especially in its formative years, through his wise counsel and invaluable educational advice."

A third college to give formal recognition to his services was the Monterrey (Mexico) Institute of Technology. In 1956 the Institute presented to the University an oil portrait of Mr. Mathews in recognition of his services over a number of years. The portrait was painted for the occasion by a distinguished Mexican artist. In his letter to President Logan Wilson expressing the desire to present the portrait, President Victor Bravo, of the Institute, wrote:
"It is our intention that this portrait be a token of appreciation to you for the services given by Dr. Mathews over the years; in advice and assistance to our summer school.

"[His] name has appeared annually in our Summer School catalogue as Consultant."

The work of Mr. Mathews was characterized by a tenacious adherence to high standards, a characteristic of great importance to education in the critical period of development in which he was most active. But he was interested in people as well as in standards. His basic kindness was sometimes obscured by a certain reserve in manner and at times by the unpleasant decisions which one in his position had to make. His concern for students with special problems is illustrated by his work with foreign students, and notably by the assistance which he gave to the group of displaced Niseis (second-generation Japanese) who were admitted to the University during the War. After his retirement he made an effort to communicate personally with members of the group and was able to locate nearly all of them. The appreciative responses of these former students were heart-warming. Friends of Mr. Mathews are contributing funds to establish a memorial scholarship for foreign students at the University.

His relations with his office staff, his colleagues, and the public were marked by dignity, refinement, and integrity. He himself was a hard worker, and he expected others to carry the responsibilities intrusted to them; but he never asked of others more than he required of himself. One of his staff of years ago recently commented on the pleasant days which were spent in the Registrar's office, the devotion to work which Mr. Mathews inspired, and the privilege it had been to be a member of the staff.

From the record it is obvious that Edward Jackson Mathews was a powerful and constructive figure on the campus, in the community, in the state, in the nation, and even beyond. His name will be inscribed among the educational
statesmen who have brought the University and the educational system of our time to its present status. More than that, he has given direct personal assistance to a large number of students and associates. He was among the last of those who would be considered his contemporaries and in retirement could see many of the results of their combined efforts; but not all, for his influence will continue through the years. We join in the tribute expressed editorially by the Austin American on June 2, 1964:

"He was known, admired and respected by the thousands of young people who have been upon the campus early or late through most of its existence.

"His memory will be cherished by associates in the administration and faculty and by those whose education was furthered, encouraged and inspired by his words and his interest."

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