Banks McLaurin, Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics, died in Austin on March 27, 1962 at the age of 73. He had retired from active teaching in June of 1961 because of ill health. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Evelyn McLaurin of Austin; one son, Banks McLaurin, Jr., of Dallas; one daughter, Mrs. Richard M. (Mary) Standifer of Austin; one brother, Coin McLaurin of Webberville; and seven grandchildren. Another daughter, Mrs. W. P. (Farrior) Christman, Jr., of Temple, had died in 1959.

Born in Webberville, a farming community just east of Austin, on October 20, 1888, Professor McLaurin spent his entire life in Travis County. He graduated from Austin High School in February, 1906, where he earned a scholarship to The University of Texas. He attended the University during 1906-1908 and 1909-1911 and received his C. E. degree in 1911. He was vice-president of his senior class and served also as a student assistant.

During the period September to October of 1911 he served as a recorder with the U.S. army Engineers, after which he returned to Webberville where he remained until 1924 as a farmer, a merchant, and a cotton gin operator.

From July to December, 1924, he served as a bridge inspector for Travis County. In 1925 conditions were changing as good roads and automobiles were shifting trade to Austin and a severe drought ruined crops. Mr. McLaurin came to Austin to inquire of the late Dean T. U. Taylor about an engineering job. Dean Taylor employed him as an instructor. After visiting the Dean's summer classes, Mr. McLaurin started as a teacher in the fall of 1925. In 1928 he completed his M.S. in C. E. degree. Except for summer work and a year's leave of absence in 1929-1930 to work in the Bridge Division of the Texas Highway Department, he remained a teacher until his retirement in 1961, completing a teaching career of 36 years.

Professor McLaurin's first love was teaching rather than research. It was his conviction
that teaching was a major function of the University, and he gave it all his energy. He was careful in his classroom presentation, thorough, and patient. His door was always open for student conferences. He progressed through the teaching ranks to a professorship in 1943. When the Department of Engineering Mechanics was first established as a unit separate from Civil Engineering, he chose to teach in Engineering Mechanics, but he retained his title of Professor of Civil Engineering and continued to serve on that Budget Council. He was chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering from 1937-1939 and on several occasions of shorter duration served as chairman of the Department of Engineering Mechanics.

Mr. McLaurin was a student in the College of Engineering during the time that many of its traditions were being founded. About that time patron saints were established in several of the colleges and became rallying points for student enthusiasm. Mr. McLaurin was a member of the small group which brought Alexander Frederick Claire to the campus as the patron saint of the engineers. For several decades Alex was a symbol of college unity and the archrival of Peregrinus of the Law School. With rivalry so intense, it was necessary for both to go underground for periods between celebrations and over the years Alex was frequently sent to Mr. McLaurin for safekeeping in Webberville.

The Engineers Loan Fund was established during Mr. McLaurin's student days and with the strong endorsement of Dean Taylor and ex-students it grew to substantial proportions. Soon after Mr. McLaurin started teaching he became one of the faculty members who administered the fund. In 1931 the Engineers Loan Fund was chartered as a corporation and he became a member of its first Board of Directors. After Dean Taylor's death he was its chief administrative officer. In 1950 the Loan Fund received a substantial bequest from a former graduate and at Mr. McLaurin's suggestion the fund in 1956 started the award of scholarships to outstanding students while continuing its loan activities. Mr. McLaurin continued to be the key man in the administration of the fund until he retired, with his only remuneration the satisfaction of helping thousands of students stay in school.
Professor McLaurin was a devoted and loyal church man, serving as a steward, trustee, and Sunday school superintendent in the Webberville Methodist Church during the period 1913 to 1925. In 1925 he moved his membership to the University Methodist Church in Austin where he served in practically all official capacities, including chairman of the Board of Stewards from 1928-1930 and as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1931 until his death, much of the time as chairman.

In 1913 he married Lillian Manor who died in 1918, leaving him with two young daughters. In 1921 he married Evelyn Davidson of San Marcos, Texas. A son, Banks McLaurin, Jr., was born of this marriage.

Professor McLaurin was quiet, modest, and unassuming, a man who had many friends. He was deliberate in his movements, but he worked efficiently and at the end of a day had often accomplished more than some of his more hurried cohorts. His sense of responsibility made him responsive to public service. Before entering teaching he had served as a school trustee, as a precinct chairman and election judge, and as a precinct food chairman in World War I. Later he was councilman for Boy Scout Troop 3 of Austin and assisted with Red Cross work.

Mr. McLaurin was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society for Engineering Education, Texas State Teachers Association, National Society for Professional Engineers, the University Club, the Masonic Lodge, the Scottish Rite, and the Shrine. He was a member of the honorary societies, Tau Beta Pi and Chi Epsilon.

Professor Banks McLaurin was a solid citizen. No one ever doubted where he stood on matters of ethics and his judgment on public affairs was excellent. He had convictions which he never hid, but he was not one to be obtrusive with them. Professor McLaurin was a man it was good to know.

Phil M. Ferguson, Chairman
V. L. Doughtie
T. D. McFarland