IN MEMORIAM

SYLVAIN J. PIRSON

Professor Sylvain J. Pirson, who taught and conducted research at The University of Texas at Austin from 1956 to 1974, died in Austin, Texas on March 22, 1983. During his tenure at The University he supervised the completion of 63 M.S. degree theses and six Ph.D. dissertations. He was the major force in establishing graduate level studies and research in petroleum exploration and well logging. During this same interval, he taught more than 1,000 undergraduate students in these topics.

Professor Pirson was born on June 28, 1905, near Louvain, Belgium. He was awarded a degree in Commercial and Financial Sciences in 1928 and in Mining Civil Engineering in 1929, both from the University of Louvain. In 1930 he obtained the degree of M.Sc. in Petroleum Geology from the University of Pittsburgh, and in 1931 he received his D.Sc. Degree in Geophysics from the Colorado School of Mines.

After receiving his D.Sc. degree he served as an Instructor in Geophysics at the Colorado School of Mines until he joined the Seismograph Service Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma as a practicing geophysicist. He worked as a geophysicist there and for the Gulf Research and Development Corporation until 1936, when he was appointed Professor of Geophysics and Geochemistry in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering Department of Penn State University. His academic career there lasted until 1949, when he joined Pan American Petroleum Corporation as a Special Research Associate. He left that position in 1956 to become Professor of Petroleum Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin.
In 1974 Sylvain Pirson was appointed Professor Emeritus in the Petroleum Engineering Department and he continued on modified service after that time. He remained active in department and student affairs until shortly before his death. He will be fondly remembered by his students and his colleagues.

During his lifetime, Professor Pirson authored two well known textbooks on Reservoir Engineering and on Well Logging. More than 20 professional papers are also attributed to him. He received many honors and awards, among which are: membership in Sigma Xi, Pi Epsilon Tau, Tau Beta Pi and Phi Kappa Sigma; Teaching Excellence Award (1959); Fulbright Lecturing Award (1967) and the Gold Medal from the Society of Professional Well Log Analysts (1974).

Professor Pirson's contributions to the University and to technology have been significant. It is only fitting that one of the larger classrooms in the new building that houses the Petroleum Engineering Department has been endowed and named in his honor.
William H. Cunningham, 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 Professors Ben H. Caudle (Chairman), Kenneth E. Gray, and Gary A Pope.