IN MEMORIAM

BENJAMIN FLOYD PITTENGER

Benjamin Floyd Pittenger died on December 14, 1969, terminating more than a half-century of service to The University of Texas, and to the public school system of this nation. From 1926 through 1947 he was Dean of the College of Education. For forty years, including the period of his deanship, he was a Professor of Educational Administration. After his retirement in 1957, he continued as Professor Emeritus to impress his wisdom upon the conduct of education in public education.

As Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Pittenger presided over the development of a college which kept pace with a rapidly-strengthening University of Texas. Marked success in bringing distinguished numbers into the faculty of the College was his greatest source of satisfaction. He led the College into graduate work of high caliber and considerable diversity. (One doctorate which he directed himself laid the foundation for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.) During his administration the University assumed leadership in fostering junior college development in Texas and in providing professional training for leaders in that movement. He won high respect from persons in the public school community also, accelerating closer liaison between the College and the clientele it served in Texas. He took particular interest in the provision of the University Junior High School and, later, the Oasis
Elementary School as facilities used cooperatively by the Austin Public Schools and the College of Education. His style of administration was such, however, that no one could elicit from him any claims to these accomplishments. It was always others who received from him the credit for advancements. His power lay in gentlemanliness, wisdom, calm judiciousness, unquestionable intellectual and ethical integrity, and obvious respect for and confidence in his colleagues. Associates who knew him best compared him with Plato's model of philosopher king.

His personhood carried his influence far beyond the confines of the College of Education. In University of Texas faculty and administrative circles, his was a respected voice and an attended-to counsel. In educational affairs of the State of Texas, he was persistently sought as a member of study commissions and advisory councils. In professional organizations of educators he was recognized repeatedly with official positions, including that of president of the Texas State Teachers Association in 1942 and of the National Association of University Deans of Education in 1940 and 1941. He was persistently sought as a lecturer and platform speaker for state and national meetings.

Being a professor, however, was Dean Pittenger's first love, and graduate students counted his courses as highly rewarding. His scholarly formulations in the art of organizing and administering school systems appeared in the outstanding journals of the day and earned for him a national reputation. His crowning achievement was Local Public
School Administration published by McGraw-Hill Book Company in 1951, which remained one of the leading textbooks in its field for ten years.

Pittenger's surviving contemporaries of the forties recall his superb speaking ability and his rare skill during the monthly general faculty meetings in clarifying issues and drawing extended discussions to precise and logical conclusions as bases for action. At such times, as well as during countless committee and other sessions, his keen wit and his sparkling and apt humor operated to ease tensions if necessary and to turn an argument or to clinch a point.

Ben Pittenger was born at Shelby, Michigan, November 26, 1883. He went through high school at Shelby and earned an A.B. degree from Michigan State Normal School in 1908. He chose The University of Texas to pursue the M.A. degree, which was awarded in 1912. In 1916 he received the Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago.

As one would expect, he began his teaching career at an early age and in a one-room rural school. But by 1913 he was an instructor in Education at the University of Minnesota, moved from there to the University of Illinois and then, in 1916, to The University of Texas as Adjunct Professor. Here he stayed, but with leave for psychological testing service in the United States Army, 1917-19, from which he was discharged with the rank of major. He was promoted to professor in 1924. Catherine Bickler became his bride in 1916, and a daughter also named Catherine joined the family a few years later. His family, hobbies of
astronomy and painting, and the world's most-smoked collection of pipes made his life one of rich variety and winsomeness, one exceedingly well-lived.

Bryce Jordan
President ad interim of the University of Texas at Austin

Forest G. Hill
Secretary of the General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors C. C. Colvert, Chairman, L. D. Haskew and James G. Umstattd.