IN MEMORIAM

ELMER RICHARD SIMS

Elmer Richard Sims, Professor Emeritus and former Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages, died in Austin on November 17, 1973, at the age of 90.

Mr. Sims was born July 1, 1883, in Crockett, Texas, the son of B. F. and Lucia LeGrande Sims. He received his early schooling in the Mineola Public Schools, entering at the age of eleven in 1894 and being graduated in 1900. The following September he enrolled in Austin College at Sherman. To the thoughtful observer, that a career such as his could rest on only six years of pre-college schooling gives ample cause for pondering our public education of today.

In 1903, after three years, Mr. Sims graduated from Austin College with a major in mathematics. He had achieved the highest average in his class during both his sophomore and senior years. Now, bachelor's degree in hand, he embarked on his career of teaching: first in Mineola High School (1903-04); then as Latin teacher, in Greenville High School (1904-05) and in Durant College of Durant, Oklahoma (1906-08). Here again one pauses for wonder: a B. A. in mathematics in those days might be qualified as a teacher of Latin, in high school and even in college. Mirabile dictu, sighs the modern!

Two life-long passions, books and the Presbyterian Church, led Mr. Sims next to the founding and presidency of Presbyterian College in Cárdenas, Cuba.
(1908-13). This work was continued in Caibarién, Cuba (1913-15) and then at Arkansas College in Batesville, Arkansas (1915-16). Meanwhile he pursued his own studies at The University of Texas (M. A., 1918) and at the University of Chicago (Ph.D., 1926). His third life-long love—third in chronology only—was Margaret Scott Dobbs, to whom he was married August 15, 1907. Of their four children (Margaret, Elizabeth, Richard, and Anna Louise), all were born in Cuba except Margaret, born in Durant, Oklahoma.

It was in 1916 that Mr. Sims joined the faculty of The University of Texas as Instructor in Spanish. Except for absences to complete his doctorate, he remained with the Department of Romance Languages until his retirement in 1953. Even afterwards—in fact until a few short months prior to his death twenty years later—he kept active in the life of the Department by serving as correspondence professor. It was a point of pride with him that every lesson he received was graded the day it reached him. During these many years past retirement he rarely came in person to Batts Hall ("Don't want to be thought meddling," he explained); but whenever he did appear, the latest generation of classified personnel and younger faculty were filled with admiration for his vigor, for his wit, and most of all for his fine old-fashioned manner.

Twice Chairman of his Department (1927-33 and 1941-46), Mr. Sims was active also in the Texas Folklore Society, the Texas State Teachers Association, the Modern Language Association, and the then American Association of Teachers of Spanish. The latter organization elected him Vice-President and member of the Executive Council for the period 1929-31. Mr. Sim's death and the naturally ensuing retrospect of his life call up many memories for those
who knew him, and for all who share his love of Hispanic studies in this country. To leaf through the pages of the AATS's *Hispania* for the years surrounding his Vice-Presidency is to journey nostalgically among such nationally significant names as John D. FitzGerald, Alfred Coester, Henry Grattan Doyle, Aurelio Espinosa, J. P. Wickersham Crawford, John Van Horne, and Rudolph Schevill. There, too, in their proper professional company one finds the names and the work of our well-remembered colleagues Dorothy Schons, Jefferson Rea Spell, Nina Lee Weisinger, C. C. Glascock, and Arturo Torres Río Seco.

Torres, Mr. Sims always proudly recalled, was brought for a time to Texas during Sims' chairmanship. He counted this as one of his chief successes, along with the attraction of Américo Castro and the permanent acquisition of a young refugee from the Spanish Civil War who arrived via Argentina. His name was Ramón Martínez-López.

Mr. Sims' activities were varied and many. University records, though spotty for a good number of the years of his long association here, reveal such threads as these:

Member of numerous college and departmental committees including Athletics, Discipline, and Chapel (this last during the war years 1916-18).

Supervision of numerous master's and doctoral candidates.

Member of the Commission on Modern Foreign Language Study. Findings (several volumes) published by the Macmillan Company ca. 1930-33 under the title "A Study of Foreign Language Teaching in Canada and the United States."

Listed in Directory of American Scholars (1950--).

Joint editor, with Miguel Romera-Navarro, of *University of Texas Hispanic
Studies. This series, which ran to six volumes from 1950 to 1954, was pub-
lished by the University of Texas Press until Sims' retirement in 1953 and
Romera's death in 1954 brought it to a close.

The list of publications that follows is probably incomplete. These
titles and the work he left in progress show him to have been a sound and pro-
ductive scholar. Yet those who knew him best will remember him primarily not
for what he wrote but for what he was: a man of gentleness and integrity.

PARTIAL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Juan de Luna: La segunda parte de la vida de Lazarillo de Tormes. Edited
with introduction and notes. Austin: The University of Texas, [1928].

Hugo Wast: Desierto de piedra. Edited with notes and vocabulary. Boston:
D. C. Heath and Company, [1930].

"An Italian Translation of Lazarillo de Tormes." Hispanic Review, vol. 3
(October 1935), pp. 331-337.

"Four Seventeenth Century Translations of Lazarillo de Tormes." Hispanic

(with Rebecca Shinn Switzer) Repaso y composición: Spanish Review Grammar
edition, [1947].

(December 1939), pp. 128-131.

Español esencial con historias. Austin: W. S. Benson and Company, [1944].

Elementary Spanish Dictionary for Schools. Austin: W. S. Benson and
Company, [1950].
Reviews:


Stephen H. Spurr
Stephen H. Spurr, President of The University of Texas at Austin

Harold C. Bold
Harold C. Bold, Secretary The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Mildred Boyer (chairman), Ernest F. Haden, and Gregory G. LaGroné.