IN MEMORIAM

MATTHEW VAN WINKLE

Professor Matthew Van Winkle died during his sleep on the night of January 23, 1977. He had been in the midst of a valiant struggle against a prolonged illness, a battle which his many friends hoped he was gradually winning. He was survived by his wife, Louise, whom he married in 1933, one son, John of Austin, one daughter, Susan McWilliams, of Baltimore, Maryland, and three grandchildren.

Professor Van Winkle was born in Shelbyville, Indiana on November 18, 1910, the only son of William Van Winkle. His sister, Pearl Van Winkle, preceded him in death. He attended Shelbyville High School and Purdue University, where he received his B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 1933. He joined Empire Oil & Refining Company in Okmulgee, Oklahoma and worked in technical service and research for nine years in this refinery, which later became a part of Cities Service. This early contact with daily refinery operation, trouble-shooting, and research established the solid background in real problems which enabled Professor Van Winkle to contribute so abundantly in his later academic research. He joined Standard Oil of Indiana in Whiting, Indiana in 1940, but one year later with the entry of the United States into World War II, a desperate need for more people trained in petroleum refining and natural gas engineering

developed. Pennsylvania State College asked him to join the faculty as an Assistant Professor and Supervisor of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering Program, which position he held from 1941-1943. Between 1943-1947 he served as an Instructor and Assistant Professor in Chemical Engineering at The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. During part of this period he was enrolled as a graduate student and obtained his M.S. in Chemical Engineering in 1946.

The vigorous postwar growth of the chemical and petroleum industry in Texas produced a corresponding growth in enrollment in Chemical Engineering at The University of Texas and the Department sought outstanding experienced professionals as additions to the faculty. Matthew Van Winkle was one of the most vital and dynamic of these additions. He joined the faculty as an Associate Professor in 1947, became the Henry D. Beckman Professor in 1971 and served as Graduate Advisor from 1959-1968 and Chairman from 1951 to 1953. He became Professor Emeritus in 1976.

His rich experience in teaching and industry, some of which had already been set down in an important book during the war years on "Aviation Gasoline Manufacture", was an immediate and major asset to the Department. He was already well known as an authority on distillation and was frequently called as a consultant. His industrial experiences had generated many pertinent

and meaningful paths for fruitful research which he followed vigorously with great enthusiasm and competence until his last days. This research led to the publication of scholarly articles and two books, the second of which is considered the authoritative work throughout the world on distillation.

In addition to this productive life devoted to quality research the 86 graduate students who obtained their degrees under Professor Van constitute a living legacy. They absorbed the same qualities of high ethical standards and professionalism that Van exemplified. The undergraduates, too, realized their great debt to him when they took their first jobs and were able to perform at a surprizingly mature professional level immediately upon graduation because of his careful and rigorous teaching of senior courses. A senior student from the last class Professor Van taught said it for all previous students by a letter to The Daily Texan on the day after Van's death.

> "This is a tribute to Professor Matthew Van Winkle, Professor Emeritus in Chemical Engineering, who passed away last Sunday. Professor Van Winkle always inspired interest and enthusiasm in the students -- both by his superb example and by his mild humor and sarcasm sans malice. His fund of knowledge and experience was unfathomable -- but he shared it freely with the inquisitive. He

was most easily approachable. He was kind to the students and held their interests high."

This together with one of the many written tributes at the time of Professor Van's retirement by a vice-president of a major chemical company and one of Van's former students, say more than any listing of accomplishments.

"You leave a great legacy. Certainly, you influenced me by your dedication to the Chemical Engineering profession. I have long since forgotten how to design a distillation column but will never forget the long years of association with a man of unwavering integrity, high principles and total dedication to his students, profession, university, and country."

Van was also a very civic minded individual, and his particular impact was in the broad area of fire protection. He served as consultant to the Austin Fire Department and to several fire fighting and fire protection organizations, giving them generously of his time and effort, not only in problems involved in fire fighting as such but in the development of building construction fire codes.

Van is gone, but the memory of his unique qualities and strong character live on in the hearts of those who knew him. His technical accomplishments alone leave one with the

satisfying knowledge of a life richly spent. But Van was an unusual man whose influence goes even deeper because his standards of quality and decency were so high. He was in constant battle with any and all forces which he perceived to be degrading standards or violating ethical principles. We are often overwhelmed by events these days and feel that such efforts are useless. The compelling truth, however, is that they were not only useful but have had a lasting effect on this institution, this department, and this profession.

Lorene L. Rogers

Lorene L. Rogers, President of
The University of Texas at Austin

Bill D. Francis

Bill D. Francis, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professor John J. McKetta (Chairman), Professor William A. Cunningham, and Professor Howard F. Rase.