IN MEMORIAM

ERNEST JOSEPH VILLAVASO
(1874-1972)

Many years ago a colleague said of Professor Villavaso: "He has a mind like an acid spray." That quality of mind determined his method of teaching. Patiently but relentlessly he forced his students to think clearly and to express their thoughts with precision.

Not so many years ago a graduate student of his who was also an instructor in French said: "He is the perfect honnête homme." Like a Renaissance man he took all learning to be his province but he had the amateur spirit in the best sense of the term. He did not parade or exploit his profound knowledge of many fields. He had been impelled to acquire it by a disinterested love of learning. He treated those of less learning and lower rank with a courtesy which was not mere form. He acted towards other human beings with an unself-conscious kindness and consideration born of sympathetic imagination. This rare courtesy is best illustrated by a policy he followed when he was absolute ruler of the French section of the Department of Romance Languages, i.e., before Budget Councils were instituted. If a French class had to be scheduled at a particularly inconvenient hour he taught that class himself rather than impose it on an underling. He bore the name of a Spanish aristocrat and his ethical values and social behavior were those of the ideal French aristocrat of by-gone days.

What LaRochefoucauld expressed by "Le vrai honnête homme est celui qui ne se pique de rien" Professor Villavaso rendered by "Decent people are modest." In this sense also he was a "vrai honnête homme."

Stephen H Spurr

Stephen H. Spurr
President of the University of Texas at Austin

Forest G. Hill

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Secretary of the General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Ernest F. Haden, Chairman, Lancaster E. Dabney, Gregory G. LaGrone, Katherine E. Wheatley.