IN MEMORIAM

CLARENCE ALTON WILEY

Professor Clarence Alton Wiley, son of William A. and Lana (Klott) Wiley, was born on a farm in Blanco County, Texas, February 23, 1890. His formal education began in the rural schools of Blanco County, at the very bottom of the great depression of the 1890's. Needless to say, the country schools of Central Texas suffered tragically during that decade, traditionally operating for only three or four months each year.

In 1908 Alton Wiley was graduated from the Johnson City High School. For a score of years thereafter he persistently pursued his boyhood dream of procuring a good education. In 1914 he was graduated from the Southwest Texas State Teachers College at San Marcos; in 1920, he received his Bachelor's degree from The University of Texas, and in 1923 his Master's degree from the same institution, with Economics as his major field of study. In 1926 he received his Doctorate from The University of Wisconsin. During the first World War, Professor Wiley served in a trench mortar Battalion of the famous 90th Division. Immediately on his return from the War in 1919, Professor Wiley was married to Miss Effie Wells of Salado. From this union three children were born: Gerald Wiley, of Fort Worth; Elaine, now Mrs. Norwood McLendon, of Roswell, New Mexico; and Joe, now living in Houston.

In 1955 Professor Wiley was married to Mrs. Mary Dean Drinkard of Austin.

Professor Wiley began his academic career as a teacher in a one-teacher, country school, in Blanco County. To the end of his life Professor Wiley remembered and recounted, in his incomparably piquant fashion, his experience as a $35.00 per month, five months per year, teacher of that rural school of forty students, scattered across what we now recognize as eight grades. In those days in rural Texas the school teacher customarily lived alternately in the homes of the members of the school board. Room, board, and transportation—in the form of a horse and saddle—were provided at a cost of $7.50 per month.

After being graduated from the State Teachers College at San Marcos and having received his Bachelor's degree and his Master's degree, Professor Wiley began his thirty-five year career as a teacher of Agricultural Economics at The University of Texas. That work he carried joyously, with great distinction and robust vigor to the very end of his life.

That is, in briefest form, a topical outline of one of the most exciting, most wholesome, most rewarding, and most joyous lives of contemporary Texas history.

One of the wise men of the West has said, "Happy is that man who works at a job at which he would be employed if there were no relation between work and pay." Alton Wiley was a happy man. For almost a half century he worked—hard, consistently, intelligently, and joyously—at the job of teaching. He was a superb teacher. He enjoyed every individual class period. So did his students. Among the young agricultural economists of the Southwest Professor Wiley had become a legendary figure of heroic stature, during his lifetime. He will long be remembered, not only as an extraordinarily effective teacher, but also as a warm-hearted, sympathetic, incredibly patient gentleman.

In addition to his major contribution as a teacher, Professor Wiley made many other valuable contributions to the life of his community. As one simple example, for more than twenty years he was a member of the Executive Committee of the University Interscholastic League, and was serving in this capacity at the time of his death. That work was most exacting, requiring regular and punctual attendance at meetings, a detached, judicial, and impersonal attitude of mind, and moral courage of the highest order. To this work Professor Wiley brought the same superb common sense, patience, basic human kindness, and sense of justice that marked all his relations with the people of his generation.

Professor Wiley's passionate love of the Texas Hill Country, of hunting and fishing, of lying out under the stars, reliving and recounting all the thrills of the hunt, never diminished. As a hunter, he was in direct line from Nimrod; as a raconteur, he was incomparable.

Professor Wiley was a gentleman, a superb teacher, a sound scholar, a full man. He was of great value to his Department, his University, his community, and, most particularly, to the thousands of students who came under his influence during his thirty-five years of University teaching. Of such men is made a University of the first class; a community in which life is rich, cultured, colorful, and pleasant.

This Memorial Resolution was prepared in August, 1956, by a Special Committee consisting of Professors R. H. Montgomery (Chair), T. H. Shelby, and S. L. McDonald. The accompanying list of major publications and other scholarly works was prepared at a later time by Professor S. L. McDonald, Dr. Gerald F. Vaughn, and Mr. Ralph L. Elder.