IN MEMORIAM

WILLIS RAYMOND WOOLRICH

Willis Raymond Woolrich was born on March 1, 1889, in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. He was the son of George and Hannah Martha (Suthers) Woolrich. Dean Woolrich married Neena Myhre on August 29, 1914, and they fostered the following children: June Beatrice (Mrs. William S. Morgan), Avis Maxine, Willis Raymond, Jr., George Dean, Paul Frederick, and Thomas Edwin.

Early years were spent on his father's Wisconsin dairy farm, but by the time he was sixteen Dean Woolrich was the assistant operating engineer of the Mineral Point Electric Plant and one year later took full charge of the power plant of an expanding metal mining enterprise. In 1907 he entered the College of Engineering of the University of Wisconsin and was graduated in 1911 with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. In 1923 he received an advanced degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin.

After his graduation he taught for a year at DePaul University in Chicago and then became assistant methods engineer for Western Electric there. From 1913 to 1916 he worked for the International Harvester Company as assistant methods engineer and director of the education department of the Deering Division. In 1916 Dean Woolrich joined the faculty of the University of Tennessee as
assistant professor of Mechanical Engineering and served there, becoming professor and head of the department, until 1933. During this 17-year period he was also consulting engineer for a number of southeastern manufacturing and refrigeration companies and in addition, developed new processes and methods for cold storage and refrigeration used by food processing industries in the South.

At the inception of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Dean Woolrich was made director of its Agriculture Industry Division. Under his supervision many new processes were developed for the preservation and utilization of southern vegetables and fruits. His best known work in this field was in quick freezing and storage which predated marketable frozen foods.

Dean Woolrich came to The University of Texas at Austin in 1936 as Dean of the College of Engineering. He was always one to encourage students to have a greater voice in planning their own academic programs. Dean Woolrich recognized the importance of industrial contact and made The University of Texas one of the first schools in the South to set up a separate placement office for engineers. The most significant single achievement of Dean Woolrich in his Deanship was the accreditation of five departments of the College. The Engineering Council for Professional Development inspected the College in 1937 and granted accreditation to the departments of Architecture, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, and Petroleum Engineering. This was largely due to the intensive work of Dean Woolrich in organizing the faculty and students in
the programs to meet the rigid requirements imposed by the Engineering Council for Professional Development. In 1955 Dean Woolrich established the Engineering Foundation. On adoption of the charter for this organization, the College gained the opportunity to seek and spend outside funds to enhance its programs. Also, during the tenure of Dean Woolrich, funds provided by Federal agencies to support research increased greatly and the faculty of the College of Engineering quickly became known as being research oriented with nationally acclaimed credentials. He established the Neena Myhre Woolrich Foundation for Women Engineers at The University in May 1973.

He was instrumental in bringing the Navy V-12 program to the University; the program provided the armed forces with engineers and other graduates with an ROTC type training. He became chairman of the Committee for the Texas Region for the Deferment of Scientists and Engineers for the Selective Service.

He also served as regional advisor for the Engineering, Science, and Management War Training program of the United States Office of Education in Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas, and as regional representative to the War Manpower Commission for the same states.

Dean Woolrich was chief scientific officer and scientific attaché in the American Embassy in London from 1948 to 1949, was consultant to the U. S. Patents Board in 1950, and was special
consultant for many years to the Department of Interior on the conversion of saltwater into fresh water by the freezing process.

In the state and national scientific fields he served as a director of the American Society for Refrigeration Engineers; Manager and Vice-President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers; Vice-President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and President of the Engineering College Research Council, the American Society for Engineering Education, and the Texas Academy of Science.

Dean Woolrich was steeped in the history and traditions of engineering education in Texas. His history of the College of Engineering, "Men of Ingenuity from beneath the Orange Tower", was published by the Engineering Foundation 1964. He was also the author of more than 125 articles and books prominent in the technical fields, such as "The Handbook of Refrigeration," "The Handbook of Steam Engineering," "Processing of Cottonseed," and a book on air conditioning, "The Men Who Created Cold."

For many years Dean Woolrich served as a technical advisor to Chululalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. In this capacity he recruited outstanding American scientists and engineering academicians to teach in Bangkok. After Dean Woolrich retired, he was the first interim president of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, from 1958 to 1960.

An active layman in the Methodist church, Dean Woolrich was
a working member of the University Methodist Church all his years in Austin. He served on the Board of Stewards and did lay preaching from time to time. When he first came to Austin he was made a member of the Methodist Church Extension Committee when there were only four Methodist churches in Austin. Later, and through the considerable effort of Dean Woolrich, there were 23. He furnished the money for the first temporary building of the Tarrytown Methodist Church.

Dean Willis R. Woolrich died in a Houston hospital February 22, 1977, thus ending a long and distinguished career as an engineer, as an educator, and as an administrator. He was eight-seven years old.

Dean Woolrich is survived by two daughters, Mrs. William S. Morgan, Norman, Oklahoma, and Miss Avis Woolrich, Fort Collins, Colorado; three sons, W. R. Woolrich, Jr., Houston, Texas, Paul F. Woolrich, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Thomas Edwin Woolrich, Waco, Texas; seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

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

Bill D. Francis, Secretary The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Jack Lenhart (chairman), Byron E. Short and Billy H. Amstead.