CURTIS JACKSON ALDERSON

Curtis Jackson Alderson, Associate Professor Emeritus of Physical and Health Education, died suddenly of a heart attack on August 31, 1970, while driving his automobile through the campus on 24th Street. He thus ended a brilliant career on the northern boundary of the Forty Acres where, except for a few years, he had spent most of his life since entering the University as a student in 1912. Although retired since 1959, he had remained active in a variety of professional and community activities. He maintained his own personal office near the campus where he continually received visitors who sought his counsel and advice.

C. J. Alderson, or "Shorty" as he was known to all his friends, was born September 20, 1888, in Franklin, Kentucky. His mother died when he was nine, and his father a few years later. He and three of his sisters then moved to Hillsboro, Texas to live with his uncle, W. P. Alderson, who became mayor of Hillsboro several years later. He attended the public schools in Hillsboro, graduating from high school in 1912. He then entered The University of Texas, and except for service in the United States Army during World War I, he continued study until he received the B.A. and LL.B. degrees in 1922. He later received the M.A. with a major in sociology from the University in 1932. Further study was done in physical education at Teachers College, Columbia University, receiving the M.A. in 1939 and the Ed.D. in 1949. He thus earned five degrees representing a total of 388 semester hours.

He began his teaching career in 1922-23 in the Calvert, Texas Public Schools, where he served as principal of the intermediate grades and was coach of all sports and of the debating and declamation teams. He next spent one year in 1923-24, teaching physical education and coaching football and basketball in a junior high school in Austin, Texas. He also coached the track team that year in the senior high school. Later, from 1934 to 1936, he taught physical education and coached football, basketball, and tennis in the Austin Senior High School while doing graduate work at The University of Texas. He began his coaching and teaching career at The University in 1924 and served as assistant coach of football, basketball, and track from 1924 to 1927, freshman coach of these same sports from 1927 to 1934. From 1931 to 1934 he was also head swimming coach and was largely responsible for swimming being accepted as an intercollegiate sport by the Southwest Conference. He joined the faculty in 1939 as an Instructor in the Department of Physical and Health Education while continuing to serve as assistant football coach from 1942 to 1947. He was promoted to Assistant Professor of Physical and Health Education in 1949 and to Associate Professor in 1956. He retired in 1959 but continued to teach part time when the need arose, the last such assignment being in the Spring Semester of 1969-70. After his retirement, he was married on September 2, 1959 to Dr. Mary Evelynn Buice, a member of the faculty in Physical and Health Education.

Few individuals have had such a variety of interests or have excelled in so many endeavors as "Shorty" Alderson. Most would identify him in physical education and athletics, and without question he was one of the most able and respected leaders in his profession and was indeed a versatile athlete. From 1908 through 1912, he participated in all sports at Hillsboro High School, lettering four years in football, basketball, baseball, and tennis. He was captain of his team in these sports--football during his last two years, of basketball in his senior year, of tennis during his sophomore and senior years, and of baseball during his freshman, sophomore, and senior years. He won the county meet for tennis during his last three years, and at the beginning of his junior year he broke his right wrist and had to play left handed. At one time or another he made the all-star team in each of these sports in the North Texas Association, which was one of the regional forerunners of the University Interscholastic League. He participated in track during his junior and senior years, specializing in the cross country run. He set a North Texas Association record of 62 minutes and 20 seconds for the ten-mile run. This record still stands today, but "Shorty" in telling the story always hastened to add that the race was discontinued soon after the record was set.

He continued this extensive participation in athletics at The University of Texas and earned varsity letters in tennis and cross country and a reserve letter in football. He was also active in intramural sports, winning the individual championship in tennis, handball, and diving, and playing on the championship teams in baseball and football. He continued regular participation in sports throughout his life, and each year until he was well in his sixties, he always challenged and beat the intramural handball champion.
His achievements in athletics were equaled by those in other fields. He was president of his senior class and served two terms as president of the high school debating society. He was a member of the glee club and of the male quartet. During his junior and senior years he won the declamation championship of the University Interscholastic League, the first year being that in which the League was founded. As a student at The University, he was a member of the glee club, the Longhorn Quartet, and the debate team. With this background, it is thus easy to understand why he was in constant demand as a speaker and why he served so effectively for sixteen years as the "Voice of Memorial Stadium" in announcing football games.

"Shorty" did not permit his extensive participation in extracurricular activities to interfere with his study. Further, his record is even more amazing in view of the fact that he had to work to support himself while attending school. He was a blacksmith for ten years in Hillsboro, and he always said that his workouts in sports kept him from his trade, but that he made up for lost time by attempting to shoe every horse in Hill County on Saturday. He earned his way at The University by working in the library, where he had the distinction of being the first paid student employee.

His legal training and his experience in athletics provided the background for him to excel and to gain admiration and respect in an activity in which many participants are often criticized. This activity is that of sports officiating. He was recognized as an outstanding official in track, swimming, tennis, and basketball, but it was in football that he had his most extensive experience. From 1922 to 1958 he officiated 828 football games, and from 1958 until his death, he served as a supervisor working with young officials in three or four games each week during the football season. He had no peer in his knowledge and application of the rules, and his interpretations were frequently sought by leading officials and even the Football Rules Committee of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Each year he was asked by this committee to edit the football rules for accuracy and clarity. In 1964 he served as chairman of a committee that prepared the Southwest Conference manual on mechanics for three-member officiating teams. He also assisted with football rules for women both at The University and for the Division for Girls' and Women's Sports of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation.

Few individuals have given as much of their time and energy in service to their profession as did "Shorty". He was affiliated with more than 25 professional organizations and served extensively on committees and as an officer in many of them. He served on the Board of Directors of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the state, district, and national levels and was president of the Texas and Southern District divisions. His most extensive participation and perhaps most significant contributions were made in the legal and structural areas. He served as chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committees and as Parliamentarian for the AAHPER Board of Directors from 1939 to 1959 and for the Texas and Southern District Boards from 1941 until his death. In addition to his participation in professional organizations, he served as a consultant for physical education in public schools and colleges and made hundreds of speeches before professional and civic groups. He served on many state and national committees and commissions to include President Truman's Commission on Safety and the Texas Governor's Committee on Safety in 1949. He was a member of the Committee on the Evaluation of the Conference Program for the National Safety Council and was a staff member of the National Aquatic Schools for the American Red Cross. From 1962 he served as a member of the Advisory Council for the Presidents Council on Physical Fitness and from 1962 to 1967 was a consultant for the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. He was active until his death serving as a consultant to the Austin YMCA Board of Directors for the Lakeside Activity Center for the Aged, and the Austin Fire Safety Board. He was a member of the Camp Committee of the Lone Star Girl Scout Council and had worked with the Girl Scouts for over 25 years.

Many honors were bestowed on him for his unselfish service and achievement. He is listed in Who's Who in American Education, Who's Who in the South and Southwest, and was a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, Phi Delta Kappa, and Kappa Delta Pi honorary societies. He was a recipient of the Honor Awards of the Texas, Southern District, and the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. In 1960 the American Red Cross bestowed on him its highest honor in the form of the Golden Whale Award for his service in water safety. His achievements in athletics were recognized in 1959 by Sports Illustrated in the "Pat on the Back" award. He was specially honored at the Texas Relays in 1966 for long and efficient service as an official and in 1969 he was designated honorary referee for the State Track Meet of the University Interscholastic League in which he had served as a starter for almost a half century. In recognition of his singular achievements as an athlete and
coach, he was inducted in 1967 into the Longhorn Hall of Honor. His most cherished honor was received in 1965 in the form of a special citation from Governor John Connally of Texas for professional and civic contributions to the state and nation.

Although he was successful in many endeavors, his greatest and most significant achievements were as a teacher. His standards were always high, and he possessed that rare ability to stimulate individuals to maximum efforts. He continually received letters from his former students from throughout the world wherein they stated that they considered him the best teacher they had ever had. He was particularly adept as a teacher of aquatics and water safety in which he achieved far-reaching results. In addition to turning out hundreds of water safety instructors from his classes at The University, he taught in the National Aquatic Schools for the American Red Cross, the last such assignment being at the age of eighty.

His success as a teacher was due in a very large measure to his own intense desire to learn and his abiding interest in people. He took a personal interest in each of his students and his office was always open for them to seek his counsel and guidance. These same qualities that enabled him to be an outstanding teacher were responsible for his success in other endeavors. Few individuals possess that personal touch that endears them to their fellowmen as did "Shorty". Seldom did he meet a stranger and all who knew him counted him as their friend. In fact, it may be said that his greatest reward lies in the memory of the thousands of his friends who respected and loved him. They remember him for his honesty, integrity, and exemplary conduct, for his hard work, fair play, and courtesy, but most of all for his abiding faith and interest in them as individuals. Few men have touched personally the lives of so many and all who knew him became better persons because he passed their way.

Bryce Jordan
President ad interim of the University of Texas
at Austin

Forest S. Hill
Secretary of the General Faculty

These Resolutions were prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors
Lynn W. McCraw, Chairman, Carolyn Hewett and Rhea H. Williams.
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