IN MEMORIAM

MARGARET R. BAKER

Margaret Robertson Baker was born on December 30, 1911, in McGregor, Texas. She received her B.A. degree in Physics from Texas Tech University in 1933 and her M.A. degree in Education from Texas Tech University in 1934. She began her teaching career in the public schools; Mrs. Baker taught algebra, general science, and mechanical drawing at Sanderson High School, 1934-1935, mathematics at Lubbock Junior High School, 1935-1939, and mathematics and mechanical drawing at Corpus Christi High School, 1939-1945. Margaret Baker took an active interest in working to benefit the United States Government. During World War II, 1941-1945, she taught eight sections of drawing for adults under the government sponsored program: Engineering, Science, and Management War Training at the Texas College of Arts and Industries.

Margaret Baker was married in 1944. She did not teach from 1945 to 1954. However, she participated in numerous community projects. She was a member of the Violet Crown Garden Club, serving as vice-president, president, and treasurer; she served as a judge in the first Parade of Homes in Austin. In addition, Mrs. Baker taught church school and participated in other activities, including the Plans Committee of the Building Commission, of the First Baptist Church of Austin.

Margaret Baker began college teaching as a Special Instructor in the Department of Drawing in 1954. Her fields of specialization were Graphics and Engineering Computations. The Department of Drawing provided instruction in drawing and descriptive geometry for engineering students. Her hiring was considered to be an act of leadership in minority employment, since women have constituted a minority in the field of engineering. For years Mrs. Baker served as a mentor for the rare woman who chose to study engineering.
In 1967 Margaret Baker received tenure as an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering. The rank of Assistant Professor ordinarily does not merit tenure; Mrs. Baker's accomplishment, therefore, is quite remarkable and indicative of her outstanding ability as a teacher. As of September 1, 1968, the Drawing Department became the Engineering Graphics Division of the Mechanical Engineering Department. In 1961 Margaret Baker was nominated for the Convair Award for Excellence in Engineering Teaching, and in 1970 Mrs. Baker was nominated for the General Dynamics Teaching Award. Margaret Baker was promoted from Assistant Professor of Drawing to Associate Professor of Engineering Graphics in the Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1972. She remained an Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering until her retirement. Mrs. Margaret R. Baker served under five department chairmen: Professor James Dorr McFarland and Drs. William R. Upthegrove, J. Parker Lamb, H. Grady Rylander, Jr., and John R. Howell.

Margaret Baker was recognized for her extreme dedication to teaching. She taught graphics for interior design for many years as well as ME 201G, Engineering Graphical Communications. Margaret Baker took an active interest in the use of computers in Engineering Education and attended workshops to learn more about this topic. She conducted studies in computer graphics and computer-aided design in conjunction with her fellow faculty during its early days at U.T. in the 1970's. She was known for being matter-of-fact with her students and having a good rapport with them. She was readily available for discussions with students outside of class. Former students who had graduated frequently made a point of visiting with her when they returned to campus for visits.

In addition to her dedication to teaching, Margaret Baker was devoted to counseling students. After teaching engineering freshman at the University for 18 years, Mrs. Baker served as a Freshman Adviser in the Mechanical Engineering Department. Her dedication to counseling students was further demonstrated by her continuous service as an Associate Counselor for the College of Engineering beginning in January 1972 and continuing until two years prior to her retirement. Part of her work involved encouraging talented high school students to attend The University of Texas. According to an article published in the Austin American-Statesman on January 30, 1972, Mrs. Baker was the first woman in the 40-year history of the engineering counseling office to hold the title of Associate Counselor. She was at that time the only woman teaching in the College of Engineering.
Margaret Baker's professional society memberships included the American Society for Engineering Education and the Texas Association of College Teachers. Among her honors and awards are membership in Alpha Chi honorary society; Member of the Discipline Committee of The University of Texas; Coordinator of the Texas Nuclear Science Symposium for High Schools, 1967-1983; and Chairman of the Henry Beckman Scholarship and Slide Rule Proficiency Awards, 1962-1976. University committee activities during the period 1971-1973 included: Engineering Commencement Committee; Ad Hoc Committee for National Engineers Week Activities on Campus; Parking and Traffic Panel; and Student Academic Deans Subcommittee of the Dean's Council.

Mrs. Baker retired in May 1988. On May 4, 1988, the Mechanical Engineering Budget Council moved to request emeritus status for Mrs. Margaret Baker. She continued to take an active interest in departmental faculty and staff activities and attended many departmental functions. Mrs. Baker died on October 3, 1991. She had two children: Peter Robertson Baker, who preceded her in death, and her surviving daughter, Sally Baker Howard. Faculty in the Engineering and Computer Graphics Area of the Mechanical Engineering Department have begun efforts towards creating a scholarship in her honor.

Robert M. Berdahl, President
The University of Texas at Austin

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professor Ronald E. Barr (Chair), Professor Davor Juricic, and Teaching Specialist Charles E. Perkins.