IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM PAXTON BOYD

William Paxton Boyd, age 90, professor emeritus of Business Communication in the College of Business Administration at The University of Texas, Austin, died December 13, 1987. During the 1926-27 academic year, Professor Boyd was hired by The University of Texas as a special assistant to the president. Instead, because of a serious need in an academic area, he was persuaded to fill an instructor position in business communication in, at that time, the School of Business. He was the sole faculty in this area of instruction. Later he was to be one of the permanent University faculty members who served with distinction in the Armed Forces during World War II.

In the years that followed, Professor Boyd was known and admired by his thousands of students. He earned wide respect for the rigorous course he taught in analytical business reporting and letter writing. Lanier Cox, professor emeritus of business administration and education, one of Boyd's former students and a colleague, remembers him as meticulous and demanding in his teaching and also a genuine and caring person. Professor Cox was once quoted as saying, "I don't suppose there has been any one teacher who has been more cussed by students, and, later, more praised by the same ex-students." Former students often ranked Boyd's writing course as the most valuable one they had at the University. For several years during the 1960's, an accounting
professor mailed a questionnaire to ex-students ten years after graduation. In response to one question—"What was the single most important course that you completed at The University of Texas?"—Professor Boyd's course always headed the list. Ex-students continue to rank the course as such.

Professor Boyd had a distinguished teaching career that spanned more than four decades (1926–1971). As a final recognition of his contributions as an outstanding teacher, he was presented the Distinguished Scholastic Contributions Award in 1971. This award is a special honor given by the College of Business Administration Foundation Advisory Council to recognize outstanding faculty members of the College.

A nationally recognized figure in his field, Bill Boyd exerted a major and continuing impact on the direction that his chosen profession has experienced. When charter membership in the Association of College Teachers of Business Writing was offered in 1936, he joined. Of the original 65 charter members, Bill Boyd was one of the last surviving three. Only 17 were living at the association's 25th anniversary celebration held in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1960. He served this professional organization as its third national president in 1940; he was one of 45 presidents during its first 50 years. In 1945, he was named a Fellow, which is the organization's highest awarded honor.
During his period of membership and influence, the Association's name was changed in 1937 from College Teachers of Business Writing to the American Business Writing Association. In response to the influence of its leaders, including Professor Boyd, another name change occurred in 1967: The American Business Communication Association. Bill would have been pleased with the final name change to The Association for Business Communication. Each change was a reflection of the pioneering efforts, ideals, and goals of the early academic pioneers in a new and significant discipline.

Beginning in the early 1930's, Professor Boyd produced the first of what was to become a number of manuals, handbooks, and monographs to supplement teaching notes and lecture materials in this evolving academic discipline. There were only two textbooks available in the field at that point; both were in letter writing. Professor Boyd's Manual for B.A. 420, for example, in analytical reporting writing, brought national recognition not only to him but also to the College of Business and The University of Texas. His three books, Some Fundamentals of Good Letter Writing (Hemphill's Publishing Company, 1939, published through several editions), Good Style and Form in Report Writing, published through three editions, and Productive Business Writing (published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., in 1959) were milestones in the evolution of teaching in his new, growing discipline.
Bill Boyd's teaching, writings, and personal influence educated students who were to become academic leaders in the business communication discipline, among them Clyde W. Wilkinson, Jack H. Menning, Raymond V. Lesikar, Jessamon Dawe, William Jackson Lord, Jr.

During his teaching years Bill Boyd served as a consultant in effective communication for numerous trade associations and individual businesses; examples are the Texas Association of Retail Credit Bureaus and the Retail Credit Men's Association of Texas. In addition to teaching at The University of Texas at Austin, Professor Boyd also taught as an invited visiting faculty member at North Texas State University, University of Florida, University of Illinois, and the University of Wisconsin.

An active member of Central Christian Church, Austin, Bill Boyd often was an official delegate to the Texas Association of Christian Churches. He regularly sang in the choir and he loved the kids. In fact, he became somewhat of a legend among the children.

He arrived early each Sunday morning and stationed himself by the soft drink machines. And, he pumped in the quarters for every kid who wanted a cold drink on the way to Sunday School Class. The story is fondly told about Bill, who having taken a taxi to church, entered the building before he realized that he had no change for the soft drink machine. He simply went to the
phone, called another cab, made a hasty trip to the 7-Eleven store for change, and returned in time to provide a quarter for the first youngster arriving who needed a soft drink.

Professor Boyd was a member of a number of honorary and professional societies, such as Delta Sigma Pi (business), Kappa Delta Pi (education), and Alpha Delta Sigma (advertising). He was born on August 28, 1897, in Amarillo, Texas, and received a B.A. degree in 1925 from North Texas State Teachers College (now North Texas State University) and a M.A. degree in 1926 from The University of Texas at Austin, where he also pursued doctoral studies in English literature.

Bill Boyd never married. His family was his mother and father, sister and brother, and his students. He was a demanding teacher, but his dedication to his students was one of persistence for excellence. He is survived only by cousins.
This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors W. J. Lord, Jr. (Chairman), Gaylord A. Jentz, and Glenn A. Welsch.