IN MEMORIAM

WARNER ENSIGN GETTYS
1891-1973

After a brief illness Dr. Warner Ensign Gettys died March 17, 1973 at the age of eighty-one. He founded the Department of Sociology at The University of Texas in 1928, and served as Chairman until 1958. In 1961 he retired from the University, but continued to teach, holding visiting professorships in Florida and Montana during the following six years.

Dr. Gettys was born April 24, 1891 at Ravenna, Ohio. He spent his early life on a nearby farm, receiving most of his primary education in a one-room, one-teacher school. After graduating from high school in Ravenna, he entered Hiram College, from which he received his B. A. degree in 1913. He began graduate work at Ohio State University while he taught history, economics and sociology at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. In the summer of 1915 he took graduate courses at the University of Wisconsin, and in the following winter he returned to Ohio State University where he received the M.A. degree in 1916. He continued as a Graduate Fellow at Ohio State University until June, 1917, when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, and spent the next two years in service, most of the last year in Allerey and Vertou, France.

Returning to the United States in 1919, he resumed work toward the Ph.D., spending the summers of 1920, 1921 and 1922 at the University of Chicago, where he served as instructor during his graduate studies. In 1920-1921 he taught at Tulane University, and from 1922 to 1924 at The University of Texas. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State in 1924.

From 1924 to 1926 Dr. Gettys was an assistant professor in a two-man department at McGill University with Dr. Carl A. Dawson, a pioneer of sociology in Canada. In 1927, at the request of President Walter Splawn, he returned to The University of Texas as Professor of Sociology in the Department of Economics and Sociology with the understanding that sociology would be established as an independent department as soon as possible. The
separation of the present Department from Economics and Sociology was
effective with the opening of The University of Texas in the fall of 1928.
In 1926, Dr. Gettys married Estelle Seger of New York and New Orleans; their
only child, Nancy, now Mrs. Charles C. Brown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was
born in 1931.

A large Rockefeller grant to The University of Texas in 1927 made
possible the creation of the Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, and
in that year, Dr. Gettys was appointed to the Advisory Committee for the
Bureau. In 1930, he became Director, a position he held until 1942 when the
Bureau was discontinued. During his period as Director, Dr. Gettys super-
vised or collaborated in six major studies in Texas: An analysis of patterns
of Mexican immigration; a study of rates of urbanization; a comparison of
county governments; a study of prison classification systems in the state
penal institutions; a survey and forecast of the distribution of state
population; and a survey of the welfare problems of Texas children.

From his first appointment to the University faculty until his retire-
ment, Dr. Gettys was a vigorous participant in University policy and admin-
istration committees. He was chairman variously of the Administrative
Council, the Executive Committee of the University, the Graduate School
Research Council, the Educational Policy Committee, the Arts and Sciences
Committee for Degree Groups, the Arts and Sciences Council for Social Sci-
ence, the Professional Advisory Committee for the School of Social Work and
the Executive Committee, School of Public Affairs.

Until the four years preceding his retirement, Dr. Gettys was an active
member of the American Sociological Society--now the American Sociological
Association. In 1938 he became Vice President, and he served from 1927 to
1960 as member or chairman of ten committees including the Executive and
Reorganization Committees. In 1939 he was elected President of the South-
western Social Science Association and President of the Southwestern Soci-
ological Society.

In addition to research and consultation with many Texas organizations
and communities as Director of the Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences,
Dr. Gettys was also a leader in the professional development of social
welfare organization in Texas and the southwest region. In 1920 he organized and served as first President of the New Orleans Council of Social Agencies. Throughout the Twenties he served as a consultant with Harry Hopkins (famous later as a New Dealer) in establishment of six councils of social agencies in various cities in the southwest. He was chief organizer of the Texas Conference of Social Work 1929 to 1931 and President of the Texas Welfare Association from 1942 to 1944. In 1948 he assumed leadership in promotion and organization of the new School of Social Work at The University of Texas, serving from 1951 to 1957 on the School's Advisory Committee.

With the exception of the Population Research Center, Dr. Gettys initiated or laid the basis for all of the present programs of teaching and research in the Department. Beginning with the Cartter Survey in 1964 the Department has been ranked among the top twenty graduate sociology departments in the U.S.

To this task of development, Dr. Gettys brought personal qualities of enthusiasm, warmth, great energy, and an absolute conviction of the intellectual and moral importance of the sociological enterprise. His education at the hands of some of the greatest teachers in American sociology—Robert Park, Ellsworth Faris, E. A. Ross and John L. Gillin—had prepared him admirably for department building. He owed much to these teachers—all of them members of the then dominant Chicago "school" of sociology. He absorbed their characteristic view that social science can develop only through observation and interviewing of men living in their natural communities. But he did not absorb what some critics have termed the bias of the Chicago school against general social theory. On the contrary, he was completely aware of the pitfalls of simple sociological empiricism. His students will remember his insistence on mastery of the theories of George Herbert Mead, Karl Marx and Max Weber, and the cordiality with which he greeted Talcott Parsons' attempt in The Structure of Social Action to develop a theoretical synthesis for sociology.

As a result in large part of Dr. Gettys' leadership, Sociology at The University of Texas attracted an uncommonly able group of graduate and undergraduate majors and minors—the minors coming particularly from Economics and Philosophy. Relationships of staff and students among the
three departments were continuous and lively, centering around Professors Gettys, Harry Moore and Carl Rosenquist in Sociology, Clarence Ayres, Edward Everett Hale and Ruth Allen in Economics, and George Gentry and David Miller in Philosophy.

During the Twenties and Thirties, the Department of Sociology offered no degree beyond the M.A., but a brilliant group of students who were to take their doctorates at other schools were recruited for sociology by Dr. Gettys and his colleagues. To mention only four of many: Kingsley Davis, now Ford Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, is one of the leading demographers in the United States and a Member of the National Academy of Science. William Josiah Goode, a Professor at Columbia University, has achieved great distinction in comparative family studies and analysis of professions. C. Wright Mills, an abrasive social critic, and also a scholarly interpreter of Karl Mannheim, needs no introduction to most literate persons even a decade after his premature death in 1962. A fourth student, Logan Wilson, who is President of the American Council on Education, contributed decisively to growth of The University of Texas during his tenure as University President and Chancellor from 1953 to 1961.

Despite the heavy demands of administration and public service Dr. Gettys was able to make a lasting theoretical contribution to sociology. In 1929, in collaboration with Carl Dawson, he wrote Introduction to Sociology, a textbook which continued to exercise considerable influence in the field through its third and last edition in 1948. This text was the first in sociology to incorporate human ecology systematically in a general theory of social organization and social change, anticipating, and to some extent stimulating Walter Firey's classic demonstration in 1945 of the interdependence of community land use and value systems. It is doubtful if theoretical systematization of human ecology in sociology has had much direct influence on the modern environmentalists and futurists. But such important contemporary studies as Jay Forrester's World Dynamics and John McHale's Ecological Context are beginning to demonstrate the correctness of this
earlier perspective in analysis and planning of the human community.

It is difficult for those of us who came into sociology after the field was fairly well institutionalized to give proper weight to the character and contributions of the department builders like Warner Gettys and Reed Bain. What attributes were needed by men who achieved organizational embodiment of this discipline with overtones of socialism in its very name, and with unhealthy interest in slums, crime, suicide, and other flaws in the social fabric? One can infer at least courage, perseverance, and idealism.

The last is what his colleagues and students will remember best about Warner Gettys. He was proud of the Department, but he did not confuse end with means. Sociology existed for him only to promote and maintain objective inquiry into all aspects of human societies for mankind in general. As a student of Weber, he knew the difficulties of achieving objectivity, and of distinguishing between mankind in general and special interests among mankind, but he never ceased to believe that these difficulties could be resolved.

Stephen H. Spurr, President of
The University of Texas at Austin

Harold C. Bold, Secretary of
The General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by the Special Committee consisting of Ivan Belknap, chairman, Walter Firey, and H. Malcolm Macdonald