IN MEMORIAM
LORRIN G. KENNAMER JR.

Lorrin G. Kennamer Jr. passed away on December 23, 1999. His death has deprived the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the Department of Geography, and the College of Education of a great teacher, an outstanding administrator, an internationally renowned scholar, a wise counselor, and a sincere, deeply-caring friend.

Lorrin was born in Abilene, Texas, on December 20, 1924, to Lorrin Garfield and Ruie Lee Kennamer. After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Lorrin received an AB degree from Eastern Kentucky University in social science and mathematics in 1948. He received an MS in 1949 from the University of Tennessee with a major in geography and education. His PhD in geography and education was awarded by the Vanderbilt/Peabody University in 1952.

Lorrin was an outstanding high school teacher in Oakridge, Tennessee, before he accepted an appointment at East Texas State College, where he served as chairman of the Department of Geography and Geology. He came to The University of Texas at Austin in 1956. He quickly established a reputation as an outstanding teacher and an able administrator. He was professor of geography and chairman of the Department of Geography and served as associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He served as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas Tech University from 1967 to 1970, at which point he returned to The University of Texas as dean of the College of Education. He provided leadership to the profession of education and the College of Education for three terms as dean.

During his years at the University, Kennamer was a skilled mentor, wise counselor, and loyal friend to many students, professors, and administrators. Those who knew Lorrin through the years came to recognize a consistent application of five values in his leadership, human interactions, and organizational decisions. Lorrin was uniquely committed to the values of honesty, loyalty, fairness, justice, and equity. These values, along with his intelligence and quick-witted humor, make it clear why legions of national and state policy makers, University leaders, faculty, and students sought out Kennamer for his advice and counsel.

At the national level, Kennamer served many years as a member of the College Board and as its chairman from 1974 to 1976. His clear, accurate vision brought many national university deans and faculty to seek his advice, particularly in troubling times in higher education.

Governor Mark White appointed a select committee, chaired by Ross Perot, to review and make recommendations relative to public education in the state of Texas. In the first week of his appointment, Perot, in a conversation with Kennamer, indicated that at the end of the committee’s work there would be no need for colleges of education or the licensing/certifying of education professionals. At that moment, Kennamer’s leadership became critical to the education profession. Today the College of Education at the University has not only endured but is one of the nation’s leading institutions in preparing education professionals. As a result of Dr. Kennamer’s hard work, the school children in the state of Texas have licensed/certified professionals in the classroom directing their learning.
Lorrin was also a scholar with enduring contributions to the professions. In 1992, Lorrin’s major professor, Dr. J. Russell Whitaker, had occasion to review Lorrin’s academic productivity and commented, “I marvel at the range and depth of your achievement . . . a truly astounding record.” In 1997, the Association of American Geographers recognized Lorrin for his service to the discipline of geography and to higher education in Texas and the nation. The association described Lorrin’s academic contributions in geography as a “testimony to what a dedicated and talented individual can accomplish.” Lorrin’s books on geography, particularly Texas geography, serve as the standard of academic accuracy and excellence and of superb practicality for high school teachers. For example, the *Atlas of Texas* and *We Texans: Our History and Geography* have for years been the major source for high school teachers as they share with their students the history and geography of Texas. The enduring usefulness of these works provides lasting testimony to the quality and thoughtfulness of Lorrin Kennamer’s scholarship.

Kennamer’s commitment to teaching is both unique and legendary. Although the majority of his years associated with the University and with higher education in general encompassed key leadership roles in administration, he continued to teach at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. His course, *Texas Geography*, was legendary in terms of its reputation, consistently having more than 100 students enrolled in a non-required course. This was not one of those “easy A” courses that students sought out, as Lorrin Kennamer was an exacting teacher with high standards and clear expectations. The requirements of map analyses, of papers, and of tests would drive away the student looking for the predictable and easy grade. However, students continued to enroll in large numbers because of Lorrin’s unique skill in bringing interest, unique information, and memories about Texas.

Lorrin was survived by his wife, Laura, of 52 years.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors James R. Yates (chair), Joe L. Frost, and Robert K. Holz.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Education, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on May 3, 2001. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under “Memorials” at: [http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/](http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/)