

IN MEMORIAM
MALCOLM Y. COLBY

Dr. Malcolm Y. Colby became a member of the faculty of The University of Texas in 1924, as Instructor in Physics. Passing through all the ranks of the faculty, he became Professor of Physics in 1934; and Professor. Emeritus of Physics in 1958. He served also as Executive Director of the War Research Laboratory and later of its successor, the Military Physics Research Laboratory, from December, 1945, to February, 1957. Dr. Colby passed away in Rochester, Minnesota, on December 10, 1962.

Dr. Colby is survived by his wife, Lacy A. Colby of Rochester, Minnesota; his son, Malcolm Y. Colby, Jr., M.D., Rochester, Minnesota; a brother, Bert M. Colby, Madill, Oklahoma; and three sisters, Mrs. Grant Saylor, Honey Grove, Texas; Mrs. Arthur F. Nichols, Austin, Texas; and Mrs. Wyatt Robertson, San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Colby was born in Honey Grove, Texas, on August 17, 1892. He was married to Lacy Adele Smith on August 10, 1915. He began his career as a teacher in physics, Spanish and Latin in the Lufkin and Devine High Schools. Later he served as manager of a store. When World War I came he was named as Supervisor of the School of Radio Operators at The University of Texas. Following the Armistice he became a bank cashier in Madill, Oklahoma. After six years in that post he became a member of the faculty of The University of Texas.

Dr. Colby received his A.B. degree from The University of Texas in 1915 and his A.M. degree in 1925. The University of Chicago awarded him the doctorate in 1929. His record in graduate studies at The University of Chicago was indeed a distinguished one, the promise of which he lived up to in the fullest in his later researches.

Dr. Colby was Chairman of the Department of Physics from 1942 - 1947, at which time he asked to be relieved because of illness. Following his recovery he became Chairman again in 1954 and served until 1957.

Dr. Colby's services to The University of Texas were many and varied. In addition to his departmental chairmanship and his headship of the War Research Laboratory and the Military Physics Research Laboratory, he served as Councilor for the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies as representative of The University of Texas from 1953 to 1957. In that capacity he participated in numerous research conferences on nuclear reactors at Oak Ridge, Raleigh, and elsewhere. He was a member of the Special Study Committee for Physics and Mathematics of the Oak Ridge Council and made outstanding contributions to the deliberations of the Committee. He also served on the Special Programs Committee of the Oak Ridge Council and he was active in all of the regular general meetings of the Council.

At the beginning of his professional career, Dr. Colby's researches were, in the manner customary to physicists in the days of limited graduate student enrollment, highly individualized and self-sufficient. He not only conceived the problem of interest, he built the research equipment in the shop, cured its diseases, took his own readings on whatever instruments were involved, came to his own conclusions, plotted his own graphs, wrote his research papers, typed them and sent them off to the journals. In later years when graduate physics began to come into its own, he was swamped with promising master's and doctoral candidates who associated themselves with him in research.

His research field ranged widely from his early work in vacuum tube techniques, radio frequency measurements, high frequency resistance of condensers, to his later and extensive researches which were in the broad area of crystal structure, X-ray diffraction, range of alpha particles, stopping power of gases, contact potentials, neutron sources and techniques, radioactive determination of the age of rocks and many other topics. He published extensively in "The Physical Review," "The Journal of Scientific Instruments," "The Zeitschrift für Kristallographie," "Journal of the Optical Society of America," "Journal of the Franklin Institute," and other professional journals. He was the author of "Sound Waves and Acoustics," an advanced undergraduate textbook published by Henry Holt and Company in 1938. This textbook is widely

used in colleges and universities and it has formed an extremely valuable textbook basis for the training of young physicists through the years. Another book authored by Dr. Colby was "Light," published by the University Cooperative Society. He also published various laboratory manuals from time to time.

Dr. Colby was a member of the American Physical Society, The Society of the Sigma Xi, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Sigma Pi Sigma, American Society for Engineering Education, American Association of Physics Teachers, Texas State Teachers Association, American Association of University Professors. He is listed in "Who's Who in America," "Who's Who in the Southwest," "American Men of Science," "Leaders in American Science," and "Who Knows and What."

Professor Colby was, in the opinion of those of the Physics Faculty who survive him, the outstanding teacher of all times in the Department. For the beginning student he was ever an inspiration and a challenge. His lectures were beautifully organized, expertly delivered without class notes and well punctuated with human interest and bits of occasional humor. His upper division courses so deeply challenged the junior and senior student that his classes were crowded to the limit of the room. He was the first to establish an extremely successful version of the upper division' laboratory in atomic physics which has formed the model of many such advanced laboratories today. His graduate courses were without question of the very highest type in that he motivated the student to be self-sufficient even if he was discouraged almost to the point of giving up. The distinguished list of Dr. Colby's master's and doctor's graduates, the positions they hold, and the attainments they have reached, are an outstanding credit to The University of Texas and to its Department of Physics.

At the University Dr. Colby served on the Faculty Council, the Legislative Council, the Engineering Sciences Placement Committee, the Personnel Policy Committee, the Committee on Work-Study Load for Graduate Students, the Science Fair Work Conference, the Graduate School Research Committee, the Committee on Meteorology, the Research Council Committee, the

Library Committee, the Discipline Committee, the Registration Committee, the Admissions Committee, the Degrees and Courses Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences and of the College of Engineering, Special-Committee on Requirements for the B.A. degree, Special Committee on Visual Aids, Committee on Testing and Guidance, Committee on Acquisition of Surplus War Materials and various scholarship committees. He served as Graduate Adviser in the Department of Physics and as the Placement Representative of the Department of Physics.

Even during his serious illnesses through the last several years of his professorship, Dr. Colby did his teaching and research magnificently. He retained his large following of students at all academic levels and he continued active in the professional journals. The record shows clearly that he was one of the outstanding members of the faculty of all times. His entire interest was in The University of Texas and his work there. No tribute such as this one can delineate his worth to the University.

A. E. Lockenvitz
J. A. Focht
C. P. Boner, Chairman

Distributed among the members of the General Faculty by the University Stenographic Bureau,
September 3, 1963.