

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES P. PAYNE

James P. Payne died on May 31, 2007 in Baton Rouge after a lengthy illness. He was 86 years old. Payne, who taught at LSU for 32 years, was named one of the University's first four Alumni Professors in 1966. Selection as an Alumni Professor is based on reputation for excellence in instruction, especially in undergraduate teaching; record of active and continuing interest and participation in areas of professor-student relations; dedication to an academic field; and outstanding professional relationships with other faculty and staff members.

A native of Missouri, he earned his undergraduate degree from William Jewell College. He entered the Navy as a pilot in World War II and served in the Aleutian Islands. After the war he returned to William Jewell where he briefly taught mathematics. He later received a masters degree from Oklahoma State University, and, in 1950, a PhD from the University of Illinois. The next year he accepted a position in the Economics Department at LSU, where he remained for the rest of his academic career.

Jim Payne loved teaching at all levels. He is best remembered as a great teacher, mentor, counselor, and friend to generations of students, both undergraduate and graduate. He had the ability to get the most out of his students, but always in a kindly and fatherly way. Few who took his classes ever forgot him. Many became his lifelong friends.

Throughout his career, he always taught at least one economic principles section per semester. He felt that teaching beginning students was something that every senior professor should do, if at all possible. For many years he closely coordinated the department's multiple section one-semester principles course. These sections, of course, were taught primarily by graduate teaching assistants. Perhaps Jim Payne's concern for undergraduate students can truly be appreciated only by those who observed first-hand the tremendous amount of time, effort, and dedication that he invested in this endeavor. Generations of graduate students learned by example.

Jim Payne was unique in that he also excelled at teaching at the highest academic level. His graduate seminar in transportation was legendary for its rigor. Many of the department's top graduate students took "Dr. Payne's seminar," even if the course was not in their major areas of concentration.

Jim Payne served as the department's director of graduate studies for many years, offering counseling and good advice to masters and doctoral students. He was also the department's first advisor for the Graduate Economics Club. Upon his retirement, he received a vast outpouring of congratulatory letters from former graduate students whose lives he had touched in his unique way. A modest man, he seemed embarrassed by such attention, however richly deserved.

His major areas of expertise were transportation and public utilities. He received national recognition when he was named to a three-year term on the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Army Transportation School. He was also a member of the regional selection committee for the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowships.

As one would expect from him, he did far more than his share of work on university committees, where his contributions were much admired by faculty and administrators alike. To his colleagues, at least, no committee assignment was more important than his work as faculty representative in drafting the University's first funded retirement system, which was later enacted into law.

In addition to his LSU faculty duties, he taught intermittently at the Naval Reserve Officers School. He ultimately achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Jim Payne was, above all, a man of great integrity in both his professional and private life. While still able, he remained very active in his church, where he was elected a lifetime deacon. He is survived by his wife Jean, a son, three daughters, and three grandsons.