

## George Granger Brown

1896-1957

For many of us August twenty-sixth will be remembered as a black day. On that day we lost a loved and respected leader. For well over 30 years George Granger Brown guided engineering students, and the mark he left on all of us will be for many years a living tribute to him.

As a man, he set a pattern which we might all emulate. He was warm and human. If in his early days he was a few minutes late to class because of some household chores, he briefly and unhesitatingly bragged, because he took pride in doing things for his children. In later years, as their accomplishments made him proud, he could not keep from mentioning them, though never beyond a justifiable expression of his devotion to his family. Another reflection of this side of his character was his interest in his community. He enthusiastically participated in many of the cultural and civic activities in Ann Arbor.

As a professional engineer and consultant, he was strictly honest. He was a man of strong convictions and always was ready to back his convictions aggressively. His philosophy included the belief that the best defense was frequently a good offense. The strength of his opinions drew him into vigorous arguments and sometimes lost for him the friendship, but never the respect, of those with whom he disagreed.

It was as a teacher, however, that he sparkled at his very best. His enthusiastic interest in all his classes irresistibly generated a reciprocal enthusiasm on the part of the students. He was always ready to be challenged by a student, and many were the lively discussions in his class. He was never caught short for a response and inevitably handled these exchanges to the enrichment of the student, regardless of whether he was a beginner or graduate.

George Granger Brown foresaw many years in advance the swing toward the teaching of more scientific material to undergraduate engineers and took as his personal project the development of a course in chemical engineering thermodynamics which

was calculated to stimulate independent and effective thinking. He shunned elaborate and extensive mathematical gymnastics and insisted on direct reasoning from a few basic scientific facts.

As a researcher, he employed his boundless energy and enthusiasm to carry him and his coworkers easily to their goals. The stimulating manner in which he handled these programs is reflected in the large number of his students who chose to follow him into the teaching profession. If he was demanding of his students, it was not distasteful to them because all realized that he demanded more of himself. The only difficulties encountered here stemmed from the fact that he always worked himself to his limit. Sometimes he was available only as he moved rapidly from one assignment to the next, but he never refused a request for help.

As a leader of his department, he was always looking toward the betterment of the staff, the facilities, and the students. The effectiveness of his leadership is clearly reflected in the many advances made by his department while he was chairman.

His devotion to the Institute was most clearly demonstrated in his acceptance of the Treasurer's office. To a man who had served on the Council, who had been a leader of some of the most important committees, and who had been honored with the Presidency and the William H. Walker Award, the work of the Treasurer's office surely must have looked more like a chore which needed to be done than an honor, but he performed the task with characteristic energy and ability.

It was possible over the years to experience many different relationships with him: sharing with him a successful venture, slaving for him when he was driving hard, disagreeing with him violently on occasion. Working with him called up the whole gamut of emotions, but through it all there remained outstanding and unshaken a feeling of complete respect. He was a leader.

A.S.F.