Memorial Resolution

Professor George L. Elmergreen (1920-1977)

After several years of poor health, George "Les" Elmergreen passed away on April 20, 1977. He is survived by his wife Jean, by his daughter Leslie, and by his son Bruce.

Born in Elkhorn, Wisconsin on July 19, 1920, he grew up in Madison, Wisconsin graduating from East High School near the top of the class of 338 students. Les, as he was called by his friends, began his association with the University of Wisconsin in 1938 as a student of Electrical Engineering on the Madison Campus. He distinguished himself there by receiving a W.A.R.F. Senior Fellowship (1941-1942) and by serving as President of the Wisconsin Theta Chapter of Eta Kappa NU (1941-42).

Upon graduation, during a period of war time, Les decided to put his engineering knowledge and talent to work for this country by joining the U.S. Signal Corps. He quickly became involved in the development and use of RADAR, one of the most exciting technological developments of this period. Les served from 1942-46 including 10 months in England, 3 months in North Africa and 22 months in Italy, emerging with the rank of Captain.

In 1946, Les returned to the University of Wisconsin at Madison as an instructor for the Electrical Engineering Department. In 1947, he moved to Milwaukee as an instructor for the UW-Extension Division where he founded the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Les received his MSEE degree in 1949 and began a research program in Electrical and Bio-medical Engineering. A close association was formed with Dr. L. Danzinger of the Milwaukee Sanitarium Foundation and they collaborated on research in the area of endocrine systems. They published numerous papers on this subject based extensively on Les' mathematical modelling and computer simulation techniques. The significance of this work was duly noted several years later in Rashevsky's book "Some Medical Aspects of Mathematical Biology" where the work of Danzinger and Elmergreen was referenced extensively and two chapters and several appendices were devoted to a discussion of their endocrine research.

Les was extremely active in university affairs where he earned the respect and friendship of the members of his own department and the university community at large. He was Chairman of the Department of Electrical Engineering from 1947 until his health began to fail in 1967. As Chairman, Les displayed the rare ability to maintain harmony and good will within the department and to advance its interests during periods of great change.

With Dean Rosenthal, he helped launch the College of Engineering and Applied Science at UWM which was formed in 1964. In his years at UWM, Les was selected to serve on most of the important committees. Two committees to which he devoted an enormous amount of time and effort were the UWM building committees for Physics and Engineering and the Science Complex. During this period, (1960-1970) Les was involved in over all building specifications including laboratory lay-out and the design of special electrical systems.
Les' main strength, however, was in the dedication and competence he gave to teaching. This contribution was recognized in 1974 when the Milwaukee Section of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) cited Professor Elmergreen "for his constant dedication and contributions to the profession of Electrical Engineering and in particular for his continued devotion to undergraduate teaching". Need more be said?

Les possessed many admirable qualities. He had the ability to boost aspirations, provide leadership and give guidance to those who need help along the way. His fairness, steadiness and subtle humor made him an excellent colleague and department chairman. Those who knew him respected and esteemed him as a scholar, engineer, as a citizen of the University, and as a person.

James Van Vleet
Harold P. Boettcher
Joseph D. McPherson
George R. Steber (Chairman)

GRS/ab