

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
EDWARD G. BEGLE
1914-1978

He was often seen pacing the University corridors with dark eyes shrouded in thought, a tall man with a full white beard who liked to walk alone. Edward Begle was an independent man. His voice will be missed in the School of Education where a well-reasoned paradigm might resolve a tangled faculty discussion. It was the mathematician in him that made him impatient with untidy thought.

Edward Griffith Begle, internationally recognized for his pioneering research in the teaching of mathematics, died March 2, 1978. He had been director of the School Mathematics Study Group for fifteen years and had developed through his investigations a curriculum in mathematics for the elementary and secondary schools emphasizing the ideas behind mathematics operations which traditionally had been taught largely by rote.

Edward Begle was born in Saginaw, Michigan, November 27, 1914. His A.B. and M.A. degrees in mathematics were awarded by the University of Michigan in 1936 and 1938. At Princeton his special field of study became topology; his doctorate was completed there in 1940. After a year at Princeton and a year as National Research Council Fellow, he joined the Yale University faculty in 1942. In 1961 he came to Stanford and served until his death. His years at Stanford were singularly productive. Through the School Mathematics Study Group he issued a long series of journal articles and research reports which profoundly affected instruction in mathematics. At the time of his death he was completing a definitive review of research in mathematics education.

Beyond his stature as a scholar, to faculty and staff Edward Begle was a staunch friend, a respected colleague, a man of solid integrity. Students knew him as a mentor with uncompromising standards but always an ally, never an adversary.

In their home, Edward Begle and his wife, Elsie, were generous hosts. The big, handsome house on Bryant Street in Palo Alto always offered a warm reception, reflecting the kind of family life the Begles had. The dark, oak-paneled study where Edward Begle did most of his writing was lined with pictures of the seven children: Cornelia, Sarah, James, Emily, Elsie, Edward, Douglas.

But neither the walls of the study nor of his office at the University divulged the many honors Edward Begle earned. In 1961 he won the Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics given by the Mathematical Association of America, the most prestigious award bestowed by MAA. Ten years later he received the Rosenberger Medal from the University of Chicago. This award, funded by Mr. and Mrs. Jesse L. Rosenberger, is given on occasion to individuals who have demonstrated significant contributions to humanity. Edward Begle also served as secretary and trustee of the American Mathematical Society and on the Board of Directors of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. In the new Washington headquarters building of the Mathematical Association of America, an Edward G. Begle Memorial Conference Room will be constructed.

The citation accompanying the MAA Distinguished Service Award closes with these words:

With the assistance of many individuals and components of the mathematical community...he has conducted a national experiment, unprecedented ... in its combination of depth, scope and size. He has done so with character and courage, with good judgment and balance, with understanding and endurance, and in a continual searching for the first rate. He is a mixture of Welshman, New Englander, American, mathematician, teacher, and sachem, and we are all in his debt. The mathematical and scientific part of American life in the middle third of this century may well be judged to have been outstanding; if the history of it is ever properly written, E. G. Begle's role therein will clearly have an exceptional place.

That statement says well how Edward Begle will be remembered.

William J. Iverson, Chairman
Elliot W. Eisner
Richard G. Gross