

Earl Rudder (1910-70), Texas A&M President

Almost a year ago today, this university mourned the passing of a famous general and a great American, Dwight Eisenhower.

On that day, more than 3,000 members of the university community crowded into G. Rollie White Coliseum to hear a tribute to "Ike" rendered by one who had served under the general during World War II.

With a wistful eye, the man at the lectern recounted some of his personal experiences with his former commanding officer; he dwelt upon Eisenhower's lofty accomplishments; he praised the general's strong character.

And then, near the end of his eulogy, the speaker said this: "General Eisenhower exemplified what millions of Americans would like to see their sons be."

Today we mourn the death of that speaker, our university president Earl Rudder, who in his own right is indeed a famous general and a great American.

And in the days to come, we will remember and recount our own experiences with the man, we will praise his lofty accomplishments, and honor his strong character.

But of all the things we could say, perhaps we would honor him most by characterizing him as he did Eisenhower: "General Rudder exemplified what millions of Americans would like to see their sons be."

For there was much within the man that deserved imitation.

A discussion of the merits of the president would necessarily involve such

adjectives as "courageous," "tenacious," "fair-minded," "jovial," and "frank."

But if one could reduce to a single word the outstanding characteristic of the man, that word would perhaps be "energy."

The same man who scaled the Normandy cliffs and straightened out the general land office, practically turned this university inside out.

In a decade he turned a segregated military college into an integrated coeducational university, meanwhile doubling both the institution's number of colleges and enrollment.

President Rudder seldom walked anywhere he didn't have to—he moved faster if he could. His days at the university would almost always stretch to 10 hours, and more often, 12 or more. He was dynamic, he took charge and stayed in charge. The pace was often hectic, but he seemed to endure it.

As the state land commissioner, he once said, "For some reason or other, all of my life I have been like I am now. I seem always to have been under stress and strain."

Accustomed to the pressure, the president seemed to simply work his problems to death.

But as is too often the case, the vigorous life is the short life.

President Rudder died before his time at 59.

It is true that the good die young, and we must all bear the loss.

'Service' Describes Life

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Regiment, which is credited with playing a major role in repulsing the last-ditch German attack in the Battle of the Bulge. Following victory in Europe, Rudder spent eight months on special War Department missions and was released from active duty in 1946 with the rank of full colonel.

He returned to Brady in 1946, and served as mayor from 1946 to 1952. He also served as a delegate to the 1948 and 1952 Democratic state conventions, and in 1952 and 1954 he represented his district on the Democratic State Executive Committee. During his years in Brady, he served on the State Board of Public Welfare, which supervised spending of state and federal money to help the needy, aged, blind and dependent children.

In 1952, he became the public and labor relations counselor at the Brady Aviation Company, which was plagued with labor troubles. After two years, he left the company which then employed as many as 1,300 without losing a single day in a labor stoppage or strike.

Characteristically, his solution to the labor problem was simple and direct: "I just saw to it that they (the employees) were treated like they ought to be treated, as people. It's just that simple."

In January, 1955, Rudder was appointed as Commissioner of the General Land Office of Texas, a position that had only recently been rocked by scandal in the Veterans' Land affairs. Under Rudder's leadership, the shadow of scandal and public suspicion was lifted.

The then Gov. Price Daniel praised Rudder at his inauguration as president of Texas A&M in 1960:

"I suppose I remember him best as the man who stepped into the State Land Office during a very difficult period and

as vice president of this institution (A&M). I accepted with regret his decision to resign as Land Commissioner and return to this campus. I congratulated him at the time of his resignation for a splendid job as land commissioner. I must congratulate him again on a splendid job here."

After his term as land commissioner, Rudder spent a year as vice president of A&M and then became president in July, 1959.

Rudder was a member of more than 30 professional, honorary and military organizations. His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, French Legion of Honor with Croix de Guerre and Palm, and the Belgian Order of Leopold with Croix de Guerre and Palm. He was retired from the Army Reserve in 1967 with the rank of major general after 35 years of service.

Baylor University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree and Sports Illustrated magazine named him a member of its Silver Anniversary All-America Football team.

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Phenomenal Growth Seen

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"Under President Rudder's dynamic leadership I feel sure that Texas A&M College will continue to meet the challenges imposed on this great institution," was the welcoming comment from Joseph J. Sekerka, then the president of the A&M Student Senate.

Texas Governor Price Daniel asserted that "Earl Rudder is among the most loyal and most determined that A&M's future will be crowned with even greater glories than its past."

The glowing anticipation of the years to come was not unfounded. In 10 years, Texas A&M went from a segregated all-male military college to an integrated, coeducational university with a voluntary ROTC program.

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas became Tex-

as A&M University in 1963, a name-change that signified the evolution carried out under the leadership of President Earl Rudder. The Texas Maritime Academy was created in 1962 and is currently building a completely new campus at Galveston for various oceanographic and marine projects.

The 1960's, the decade of Earl Rudder, saw Texas A&M become a national leader in nuclear and space research, as well as in computer operations and oceanographic activities.

The achievements in building and research were the result of a report in the early part of the 1960's by the Century Council, a committee of 100 distinguished Texans who conducted a thorough study of the institution and then made long-range recommenda-

tions. The A&M Board of Directors outlined specific objectives set for completion by the university centennial in 1976. Under Rudder's leadership, the majority of the objectives were achieved in less than half the allotted time.

The report of the Century Committee called for development of a physical plant consistent with a program of excellence, increased emphasis on strong research and graduate programs, strengthening existing instructional programs and expansion into new fields.

New building facilities constructed during the Rudder years include the Olin E. Teague Research Center, Nuclear Science Center, Architecture Building, Library, Plant Sciences Building, Biological Sciences Building and the Information Services Building.

Also, the Cyclotron, Hensel Apartments, new units for College View Apartments, several resident dormitories, additions to the veterinary medicine complex and improvements to Kyle Field stadium.

The university research budget was more than doubled to the present \$24 million. When A&M College became a university in 1963, there were five designated college divisions. These original five have since been divided and increased to become 10.

Silver Taps Scheduled Tonight

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Eight students will serve as pallbearers.

Burial will follow the local services. Following Mr. Argue's religious service at the cemetery, a military service will be held.

Military honors will include a 21-gun salute, silver taps and the flag-folding ceremony by the eight pallbearers.

Eighty students from the Dominican Republic are observing

a day of mourning today for the late president.

Rudder was recipient earlier this month of the Dominican Republic's highest honor for service to the country in an international capacity.

The award—the decoration of La Orden Heraldica de Cristobal Colon (the Order of Christopher Columbus) — was announced by Dominican President Joaquin Balaguer.

The Battalion

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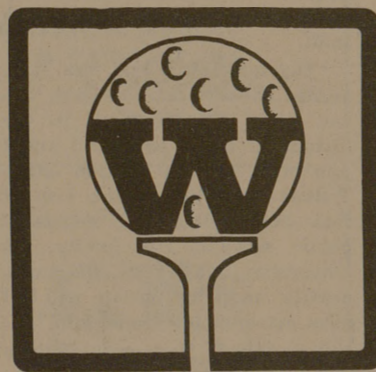
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