

Edwin Nungezer

February 25, 1902 — July 10, 1950

Edwin Nungezer was born in Pooler, Georgia, on February 25, 1902, the son of a clergyman. His childhood and youth were spent in the South. In 1923, he received the degree of Bachelor of Science from Furman University where his major subject of study was Physics. Yet, Ed Nungezer's principal and abiding interests, which were to contribute to his distinction as an outstanding teacher at Cornell, were in the humanities. Thus, he came to Cornell where he earned the M. A. in 1925 and the Ph. D. in 1927. His intensive study of English literature began, however, when, as an undergraduate, he was a part-time compositor during the academic year, and during summers a full-time compositor in a printing company. In these non-academic interims, he read widely in English literature, apparently in anticipation of his later graduate studies.

Professor Nungezer was a member of the honorary societies, Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. He regarded as an equal honor his election to honorary membership in Kappa Alpha Fraternity, in recognition by his students of his qualities as a friend. For the year 1938-39, he was awarded a fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library. At Cornell, he was a member of the Goldwin Smith Library Committee, of the Graduate Committee of the Department of English, and of the faculty Research Club.

As a graduate student at Cornell, Ed Nungezer worked under the direction of the distinguished Shakespearean scholar, Joseph Quincy Adams. He became Adam's favorite student and justified that high estimate by his doctoral thesis, *A Dictionary of Actors to 1642*, published by the Yale University Press in 1929 and well received by scholars. For some thirteen years Professor Nungezer had been working on a definitive edition on the writings of Samuel Daniel (1562-1619), poet, critic, and historian.

When J. Q. Adams was appointed Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C., he again expressed his very high opinion of his former student by recommending that Ed Nungezer succeed him at Cornell. Thus, after having been assistant professor at the University of Oklahoma from 1927 to 1931, Ed Nungezer came to Cornell as assistant professor of English. In 1940 he was promoted to the rank of associate professor.

As a graduate student Ed Nungezer demonstrated some of the qualities that later were to make him a successful teacher, particularly with his graduate students, of whom he had a great many. He himself was an intensely devoted and serious student, working so single-mindedly as actually to impair his health, yet living in the joyous conviction of achievement and of the value of humanistic scholarship. As a graduate student and as a professor

he tackled whatever he believed needed to be done with a determination to see it through without regard for his personal pleasure or pain. In his teaching and research, Ed Nungezer was always methodical, thorough, concise, and comprehensive, the notations in every volume of his large personal library giving eloquent testimony of that fact.

Professor Nungezer expended the major portion of his time and energies on his students,—undergraduate and graduate—believing that first a professor must prove his worth as a teacher. He earned the respect and affection of his students,—of his graduate students in particular, many of whom developed for him a devotion and personal affection that have endured. They found in him a man who could share their problems and joys; a man who taught them humanism at its best; a man who demonstrated the responsibilities and satisfactions of scholarship. When his former graduate students were professionally successful, he shared their pleasure and satisfaction. In publications, which resulted from their theses directed by Professor Nungezer, his students invariably expressed their frank and sincere acknowledgment of his helpfulness and kindness. As a matter of fact, however, had he been concerned with the full recognition of his share in these publications, his name could justly have been on the title-pages as co-author of a number of them.

Between Ed Nungezer and his friends there was a strong and abiding affection. His friends were impressed by his sympathetic understanding, his generosity and ready appreciation, his complete unpretentiousness and honesty, his sturdy independence. His attitude was that the person before him was in all essential respects, as a human being, at least his equal.

R. C. Bald, F. S. Freeman, H. A. Myers