Claude Albritton moved on to new ground on November 1, 1988, after a few days' illness. His last book was finished and his portion of the Qattara Depression paper done and passed to others. No projects remained unfinished, except those in his fertile imagination. He had been in good health and enjoying life—active and vital until felled suddenly by the failure of a heart whose work was done. He was a complicated but remarkably simple person. His passion was new ideas—or new ways of looking at old ideas. His intellectual style was, at its root, uncomplicated, direct and elegant in its simplicity. This mindset was reflected in his lifestyle which was, also, simple but elegant—simple in his wants and desires, elegant in the quality he demanded of himself and others.

Claude Albritton was born in Corsicana, Texas, in 1913. He grew up there, and, when he was ready to enter Southern Methodist University in 1929, the family moved to Dallas. Undergraduate years at SMU were those of contact with a strong teaching faculty in many fields. Ellis Shuler in geology and Edwin Foscue in geography were especially stimulating, and his interest began to concentrate on these subjects. Graduation from SMU with majors in these subjects prepared him well for graduate work in geology at Harvard. There he sampled widely across the geological sciences but was particularly influenced by Marland Billings, under whom his dissertation research in Trans-Pecos Texas was carried on, and by Kirk Bryan, with whom he did field work in Trans-Pecos Texas and New Mexico. It was here that his interest in landforms began and, of equal importance, his interest in the geology of archaeological sites, interests to which he returned many times in his own professional career. Completion of the Ph.D. paved the way for his return to a faculty position in the Department of Geology at SMU in 1936.

World War II interrupted many lives, including Albritton's. Service with the U.S. Geological Survey in the Military Geology Branch and in the Strategic Minerals Branch provided the opportunity to work with many distinguished geologists—among them Bill Rubey, Tom Nolan, Tom Lovering, and Jim Gilully, with all of whom he continued lively professional and personal contacts throughout his career.

In 1946, after the war, Claude resumed his faculty position at SMU and when, in 1949, the SMU chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was established, he was a charter member.

Claude was the consummate academician—a superb scholar-teacher and administrator. It is entirely safe to say that the very significant gains in the quality of academic programs at SMU during the decades of the fifties, sixties, and seventies were largely the result of his leadership. These include the building of a strong program in the geological sciences, the acquisition of an equally strong department in archaeology from another institution, the launching and nourishing of five now-strong doctoral programs, the building of a distinguished science library, with special strengths in the geological sciences, the acquisition of the DeGolyer Geological Library and
DeGolyer Western Library (history, economics, politics) and the building of accompanying physical facilities for the sciences (the N. L. Heroy Science Hall) and the libraries (the Science Information Center).

Besides these largely administrative accomplishments, he was a superb teacher at all levels, from freshman to Ph.D. student. Organized and articulate presentation of often new information characterized his lectures. The stimulating and seminal questions coupled with writing projects that demanded clear and parsimonious expression were the hallmarks of his seminars. Occam's Razor was his weapon, and the Principle of Simplicity his guide.

Despite high and unrelenting standards, he was held in universal respect and affection by his students. His relationships with them were lifelong. Many sought him out for personal and professional counsel long after they were well established in their own careers.

It was research, of course, that fueled his teaching. And his research interests and writings ranged widely. In the bibliography that follows, for example, titles include papers on structural geology, paleontology, and the geology of impact craters. Most would agree, however, that Claude's most significant contributions are in the history and philosophy of geology. The several books that bear his name are in this area. *The Fabric of Geology* commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geological Society of America. *The Abyss of Time* was runner-up as the best book in science for the National Book Award. The significance of these books lies in the fact that they examine the fundamental philosophies that undergird the earth sciences and trace the history of these basic ideas and their impact on the science.

Throughout his career Claude was also interested in the geological interpretation of archaeological sites. This led to important field work and ensuing publications on the American Southwest and on Egypt and Ethiopia. He played a key role in the founding of the Geological Society of America Archaeological Geology Division. It was this sense of the importance of interdisciplinary research that led to the founding of the Institute for the Study of Earth and Man (embracing anthropology, geological sciences, and statistics) at Southern Methodist University.

While he left many tangible monuments in scientific papers and books written, in institutions built, and in libraries nurtured to a high level of quality and recognition, Claude's greatest monuments are in the lives he touched—students, colleagues, and friends.


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