IN MEMORIAM
RALPH W. CAIN

Ralph Cain was awarded a Ph.D. in 1964 from The University of Texas at Austin, completing a dissertation titled *An Analysis of the Achievement of Students in Selected High School Biology Programs in Relation to Their Mathematical Aptitude and Achievement*. This dissertation title captured Ralph Cain’s personal and academic interests, which endured throughout his career as a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education. Ralph’s activities centered on public school students and the public school teachers prepared by the University to be skilled mathematics instructors. Ralph was a professor who would mentor, instruct, and provide critical teaching skills to university students. He could convince them that they were needed as skilled contributors to developing mathematicians. As a professor, Ralph had appointments not only in the College of Education but also in the College of Natural Sciences as a mathematics professor. While the integration of these complementary disciplines makes perfect sense given Ralph’s interests, joint appointments are a difficult career path to navigate within the University’s governance and administrative structures. Given Ralph’s style and personality, however, he was a valued contributor to both colleges and departments throughout his years at UT Austin. Ralph was also able to effect student integration into both departments for their academic degrees, their licenses, and their certifications as teachers of mathematics, not a small task.

Ralph served as graduate advisor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, addressing the uniqueness of individual students, their courses, professors, academic performances, personal and professional issues, among others. The number of dissertations he
chaired and served on as a committee member speaks to his contributions to students completing
doctorate work in several departments. He chaired sixty-nine Ph.D. dissertations and served on
228 additional Ph.D. dissertation committees, a remarkable level of production. Many students
recognized that they needed Ralph Cain’s mathematical knowledge and mentoring to complete
their degrees.

Not only was Ralph unique in academic interest and work, but he was noted for his ability
to find an unoccupied TV in the Sanchez Building at noon and have others on the staff and faculty
join him in for “soap operas” during his mid-day/lunch break. He knew all the characters and their
ongoing dilemmas. If you missed an episode, you could count on Ralph to fill you in.

Ralph’s range of “soap operas” included his experience in country music dance halls, in
the days when Austin was (more than by slogan) “weird.” Austin-based country music bands
enhanced many an evening of two-stepping by Ralph at the Broken Spoke. If you went dancing
with Ralph, you were to stay through the last set!

The University of Texas at Austin, the public schools of Texas and beyond, mathematics
ducation, and the graduate students of UT Austin were served well by Ralph Cain.
This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Anthony Petrosino (Chair), Elaine Horwitz, and Jill Marshall.