IN MEMORIAM
DONALD T. RIPPEY

Donald T. Rippey, Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership and Policy at The University of Texas at Austin, passed away in Austin, Texas, on March 16, 2016, after a long and distinguished career as a higher education scholar, academic leader, and public servant. A member of the Education faculty at UT Austin, Dr. Rippey was a prolific and nationally recognized scholar and a dedicated teacher who enthusiastically shared his expertise and passions with students. Through his remarkable career, Dr. Rippey built an admirable legacy of work in the private sector and through leadership roles in higher education, and he had a significant scholarly impact at UT Austin.

Born January 1, 1927, Dr. Rippey was an only child to Charles and Lydia Rippey of Aztec, New Mexico. He served as a park ranger for Rainier National Park in Washington, but he frequently attributed his passion, energy, and enthusiasm to his earliest role model, his mother, who was a beloved school principal in New Mexico. After receiving his B.A. and his M.A. from the University of New Mexico, he earned a Ph.D. from Colorado State College at Greeley, Colorado.

Dr. Rippey’s higher education career included academic and administrative roles at Columbia Basin College in Pasco, Washington, El Centro College in Dallas, Texas, and finally Roswell Community College, where he served as President and which he established as a branch of Eastern New Mexico University. In 1966, he was appointed the first President of El Centro College in Dallas, Texas, and was instrumental in creating El Centro as it is today. His book about his experience as President, Some Called it Camelot: The El Centro Story, detailed the early days
of El Centro and explained several formative decisions, including the hiring of some of the key administrators, staff, and faculty. He was proud of the national impact of El Centro, which enjoyed a high reputation as a showplace of student diversity, high academic standards, and excellent faculty morale. In addition, he served as Interim President of The University of Texas, Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas, 1982-83. The UT Board of Regents gratefully acknowledged this service of Dr. Rippey’s to the UT system.

In 1976, Dr. Rippey joined the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin as a Professor in the Department of Educational Administration (now called Educational Leadership and Policy). He taught primarily in the leadership programs within the department, most frequently in the training of future community college leaders. He also served in several important leadership and service roles within the department and college, including the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee. Dr. Rippey’s scholarly research focused on student development issues in higher education. He was author or co-author of several books and numerous journal articles primarily focused on community college students. Dr. Rippey served the University and its students admirably until he retired in 1994, and he remained a valued resource for our students and faculty until his passing in 2016.

Dr. Rippey was briefly survived by his treasured wife of forty years, Dr. Gwendolyn H. Rippey, a professional psychologist. The amazing “Dr. Gwen” passed away on August 19, 2018, at the age of eighty-seven. They are survived by their children, Gary Hall, Kim Hall, and Kelley Harris (husband Dan). Dr. Rippey had five grandchildren (Jason and his wife Kristen, Sheree and her husband Robert, Morgan and her husband David, Jennifer and her husband Krishna, Travis and his wife Emily) and numerous great-grandchildren.
This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Norma Cantu (Chair), Martha Ovando, and Pedro Reyes.