IN MEMORIAM
BEN H. CAUDLE

The person who became Professor Emeritus Ben H. Caudle entered this world in Midlothian, Texas, on April 27, 1923, and departed this life in Austin, Texas, on February 6, 2019, at the age of ninety-five. He was the son of proud parents Allen and Mattie Caudle, who were both school teachers at the time of his birth. He was raised and attended high school in Dallas, Texas, graduating at the age of sixteen. Heeding his father’s advice, he attended a junior college before transferring to The University of Texas. Ben received a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the University in 1943 after which he took a job in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, at the U.S. Bureau of Mines. He was drafted soon after and served as an enlisted infantryman in the Third U.S. Army where he saw action in the Battle of the Bulge and the crossing of the Rhine river into Germany. His unit shipped out of Europe with the goal of participating in the invasion of Japan, but this was happily pre-empted by Japan’s surrender. He landed in New York City on V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day) instead.

Upon discharge from the army he returned to the Bureau of Mines before relocating to Dallas to be closer to his family. Having gone to the Atlantic Refining office in the Magnolia Building in Dallas seeking a job, he was hired on the spot as a research scientist specializing in oil recovery and the measurement of relative permeability.

During this time he met the love of his life, Edna Lucille (Teal) Stewart. They were married in 1948, spent fifty-five happy years together, and were blessed with two sons, Alan and Brian.

Shortly after he gave several invited lectures in the Department of Petroleum Engineering at the University through the Atlantic Lecture Series, Ben returned as a Ph.D. student under the
supervision of Professor Hal Silberberg. Ben always said he came back because he wanted to learn more mathematics and apply what he learned to his research in oil recovery. He received his Ph.D. in 1963 and promptly became the Chair of the department, a capacity in which he served for four years.

For over forty years, Ben pioneered research in improved oil recovery. His work included new recovery technologies such as water-alternating-gas (WAG) injection. He began his research career studying physical models, then electrical analogs, and finally made the jump to the computer age with numerical models, some of which are still used today. He authored numerous papers and two text books. He was invited to write a section on oil and gas production for the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Ben was honored with numerous awards by his professional societies, becoming an Honorary Member of both the Society of Petroleum Engineers and the American Institute of Mining Engineers. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1988.

There can be no doubt that Ben’s proudest achievement was the teaching of many undergraduate and graduate students during his long teaching career. After he retired in 1997, his ex-students raised funds to start the Caudle Excellence Fund and to create a student center in the department named the Caudle Learning Center in his honor.
This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professor Larry W. Lake (Chair), Professor Gary A. Pope, and Distinguished Senior Lecturer Paul M. Bommer.