



# WILLIAM W. HUSE

*A Tribute by  
Harvey Eagleson*

Suddenly and without any real warning, Bill Huse died on Friday, January 31. As someone has said, only the good die that way.

William Woodman Huse, professor of English literature at the California Institute of Technology since 1947, and a member of the English department since 1929, was born in Rockford, Illinois, on May 25, 1898. Until he settled at Caltech he was somewhat of an academic wanderer. He started his college education in Chicago, received his AB from Stanford, his MA from Princeton. He taught at Washington University in St. Louis, Princeton University and the University of Kansas. He published the usual professorial articles, a text book and several witty short stories. But it is not for these things that Bill will be remembered by his many, many friends all over the United States.

First, perhaps, they will remember his sense of humor. It was intricate, subtle, learned and sharp. The little jingles, quips and epigrams he tossed off apparently without effort were the delight of many an Athenaeum luncheon, many a faculty party, and many a classroom hour.

Second, perhaps, they will remember him for his gentleness and kindness, his ability to give himself to others. The uncomplaining patience with which he did small tasks for his sick or elderly friends, which they were unable to do for themselves, was almost "saintly," as one of his friends once said, though no one would have

deplored that term more than Bill, for it must be admitted that like Chaucer's Doctor "His studie was but litel on the Bible."

Third, perhaps, they will remember him for his wide variety of interests that made him a friend of so many different kinds of people. There was his scholarly interest in early California history, Pepys, in Fielding—with whom he had much in common, both in his sense of humor and his attitude toward life. He liked to garden, carve in wood, to play games and swim. He liked parties, formal and informal, expected and unexpected, and the good food and drink that go with them. He liked to travel, enjoying equally the luxury hotel or a sleeping bag in the mountains or on a Mexican beach. He liked the theater and his taste was catholic, everything from *Hamlet* to the clowning of W. C. Fields. He read enormously, novels, plays, essays, philosophy, science, criticism, detective stories. His collection of books on the drama, architecture and furniture is impressive and valuable. He liked clothes and his accumulation of neckties is almost as impressive as his collection of books. But above all he liked his friends.

Perhaps the best tribute to him comes again from Chaucer who was one of his favorite poets and whom he was re-reading when he died.

"And gladly wolde he learn, and gladly teche."

Hail and farewell, Bill Huse.