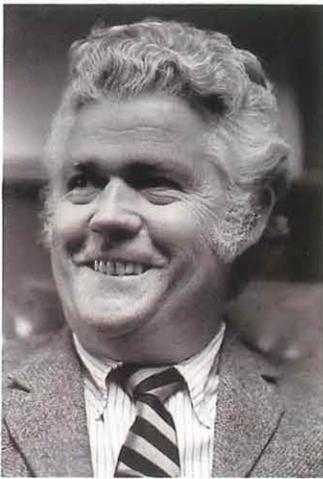


**ROBERT W. OLIVER
1922-1998**


J. Kent Clark, professor of literature, emeritus, spoke at a service at Glendale Forest Lawn July 23; parts of his talk are excerpted here. Oliver had delivered Clark's elegy on David Wood and the Caltech Stock Company (of which all three men were charter members) at Wood's memorial service in April. A campus memorial service for Oliver is planned for the fall.

Robert W. Oliver, professor of economics, emeritus, at Caltech, died Friday, July 17, of a heart attack in Pasadena. He was 75.

A native of Los Angeles, Oliver earned his bachelor's degree in international relations and economics from the University of Southern California in 1943. He then focused his attention solely on economics, earning his master's in that subject in 1948, also from USC. For his doctorate, he again concentrated on economics, earning his degree from Princeton University in 1957.

His academic career covered several institutions. Before coming to Caltech, he was a teaching assistant at USC from 1946 to 1947, an

instructor of economics at Princeton in 1948, an assistant professor at USC from 1952 to 1956 and a research economist at the Stanford Research Institute from 1956 to 1959. He became an assistant professor of economics at Caltech in 1959 and a full professor here in 1974. During his time at Caltech, he was also an economist at the World Bank, and a consultant to the Brookings Institution and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. While at Caltech he also served as Master of Student Houses from 1987 to 1988 and chaired the convocation committee as well as serving on several other

Institute committees.

He held fellowships at the London School of Economics and the Rockefeller Foundation. He was a member of several professional associations, including the Royal Economic Society, the American Economic Association and the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Oliver also served in several positions with the city of Pasadena, including the Pasadena Citizens Downtown Improvement Board, the Pasadena Board of Directors (the Pasadena City Council), the Planning Commission, and the Future Land Use Committee. He was a current member of the Pasadena Utility Advisory Committee.

A lovely and fundamental fact about Bob is that he had music in his corpuscles. He grew up with the Gershwins, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Ray Noble, Rudy Vallee, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong. He helped to dance in the swing era with Benny Goodman, the Dorseys, Glen Gray, and Glenn Miller, and of course he danced miles to "In the Mood." In the process of soaking up the music he also soaked up song lyrics. There may be a few Crosby, Sinatra, or King Cole lyrics he didn't know, but they are probably not worth knowing. After World War II, he made a fine tape (with commentary) of the songs that had consoled and heartened GIs around the world and their women in the shipyards. To Bob, the songs were friends; and Bob did not forget his friends.

It is absolutely typical of

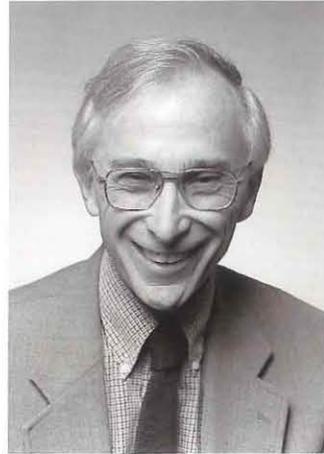
Bob that he specified the music he wanted played at his memorial service—the music we are hearing today. And I hope there is no one here under the age of 55 who cannot recognize most of the tunes. And if there is anyone who doesn't recognize any, he is either tone deaf or he has wandered into the wrong service. For years, incidentally, Bob and I tried to make a definitive list of the 10 top songs of our century. We juggled the order from time to time, added one or subtracted one; but one song always stayed at the top of Bob's chart: "I Get a Kick Out of You." This is typical of Bob's taste in songs: buoyant, neatly crafted, and melodic, with the sentiment happily understated.

Again, it is typical of Bob that at his desert house at La Quinta, which his mother built, he kept a great collec-

tion of 78-rpm records, as well as an old-style radio phonograph and changer that would handle them. But although it is completely characteristic for Bob to hold onto his old records, it is also characteristic and symbolic that he made tapes of them and acquired CDs of well-engineered re-pressings. He kept his music available. One of the reasons Bob loved songs was that songs collapse time, and Bob wanted his past brought into his present. He lived very well in the present, as we all know, and he studied it with great skill, but he didn't forget how he got here or what great people had made the journey worth taking.

How he got here brings us, naturally, to the St. Louis Cardinals. The size of L.A. and the primitive state of air travel meant that Los Angeles didn't have a major league

TOMBRELLO NAMED DIVISION CHAIR



Thomas Tombrello has been named chair of the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy, succeeding Professor of Physics Charles Peck, who had been division chair since 1993.

Tombrello, also a physicist, and his research group are primarily involved in applying the techniques of theoretical and experimental physics to problems in materials science, surface physics, and planetary science.

His ongoing research includes understanding the damage processes caused by megavolt ions in solids, characterizing the sputtering of materials by low-energy ions, and growing and studying novel light-emitting materials.

A native of Texas, Tombrello was born in Austin, grew up in Dallas, and earned his BA, MA, and PhD degrees at Rice University in Houston.

Tombrello came to Caltech in 1961, and except for a brief stint on the Yale faculty, has been here ever since. A full professor of physics since 1971, he also served as vice president and director of research at Schlumberger-Doll Research from 1987 to 1989. He was named William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor at Caltech in 1997.

Tombrello said that his immediate goals will be to strengthen the division's efforts in theoretical physics, mathematics, and observational astronomy. □

HONORS AND AWARDS

Thomas Ahrens, W. M. Keck Professor of Earth Sciences and professor of geophysics, has been selected as a Geochemistry Fellow for 1998 by the Geochemical Society and the European Association for Geochemistry, for his outstanding contributions to geochemistry.

Assistant Professor of Biology José Alberola-Ila has been named a 1998 Pew Scholar as part of the Pew Scholars Program in Biomedical Sciences. He studies signal transduction in the immune system.

Michael Alvarez, associate professor of political science, has been selected to serve as an executive council representative for the Western Political Science Association, 1998–2001.

Tom Apostol, professor of mathematics, emeritus, received the Trevor Evans Award of the Mathematical Association of America, presented to authors of exceptional articles that are accessible to undergraduates. Apostol's prizewinning article on the prime number theorem, published in *Math Horizons*, covered some of the same material as an article that originally appeared in *E&S* (1996, No. 4).

team. Bob adopted the Cardinals—not the ersatz Cards of the expansion days, but the genuine article. They won the World Series in '31 and '34, and they were a match for the redoubtable Yankees, whom they beat in '26 and '42. The Brooklyn Dodgers, on the other hand, were the boys of summer and the failures of fall. When they finally started winning league championships, they routinely lost the series. Their lone, puny victory in '55 couldn't atone for their flops.

Well, we all know Bob Oliver and loyalties. When the Dodgers moved to L.A. and changed their losing ways, they didn't change Bob's mind. He was with his old friends in sickness and in health, in 1967 and 1968, winning and losing. Granted that the Cards are an odd symbol of Bob's permanent attachments, they are a great one nevertheless.

And there is one more, which may be even odder and greater. That is the round table at the Athenaeum. Bob loved to lunch there with his longtime Caltech colleagues. They settled the state of the arts, the state of the nation, the economy, international politics, the condition of the cosmos, and the future of the Institute. They kept Bob and each other firmly grounded in the current world. Last Friday they almost settled the seismic future of Altadena, but there were data lacking and Bob told me a James Thurber story. I think Bob would not complain if, for now, we left him there laughing and talking with his marvelously bright friends. But let's not. Let's leave him at home with Jean, sipping a drink as they watch the TV, seeing Mark McGwire hit two home runs, and seeing Bob's Cardinals beat the unrecognizable Dodgers. □