



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 27, 1965

TO MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY:

I regret to inform you of the death of Dr. Philip Franklin, Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus, and former Secretary of the Faculty. He died unexpectedly Wednesday morning at the Massachusetts General Hospital, where he had been admitted January 8 for surgery following an earlier operation at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. Professor Franklin, who retired last June, had taught on a part-time basis this fall and had expected to return to his classes next term.

An able and devoted member of the mathematics faculty for forty years, Professor Franklin had an abiding concern for students and the process of teaching. He was a champion of the undergraduates particularly, and his contributions to their welfare took many forms. As Secretary of the Faculty from 1959 to 1964, he served also as chairman of the Committee on Academic Performance where he took the lead in a thoughtful review and improvement in the Institute's grading practices. In this undertaking, as in so many others, he played an unassuming but most effective role.

Professor Franklin was managing editor of the M.I.T. Journal of Mathematics and Physics from 1929 to 1945 and an editor since that time. He was the author of more than 60 papers in the fields of geometry, topology, and analysis. In 1936, at a meeting of the American Mathematical Society, he presented an invited address entitled, "Transcendental Numbers," a subject to which he had made a significant contribution. His monograph, The Four Color Problem (1941), appeared as part of the Galois Lectures and received wide attention. He also was the author of seven books: Differential Equations for Electrical Engineers (1933), A Treatise on Advanced Calculus (1940), Methods of Advanced Calculus (1944), Fourier Methods (1949), Differential and Integral Calculus (1953), Functions of Complex Variables (1958) and Compact Calculus (1963).

Born in New York City in 1898, Professor Franklin received the bachelor of science degree from the City College of New York in 1918. After working for the U.S. Army for a year as a ballistics computer, he enrolled at Princeton, where he received the degrees of master of arts in 1920 and doctor of philosophy in 1921. He taught at Princeton for a year and was Benjamin Pierce Instructor in Mathematics at Harvard for two years before coming to M.I.T. in 1924 as an instructor in mathematics. He was appointed assistant professor in 1925, associate professor in 1930, and professor in 1937.

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With the exception of two leaves of absence, Professor Franklin had been at M.I.T. continuously since his first appointment. In 1927-28 he was a Guggenheim Travelling Fellow at Göttingen, Germany, and Zurich, Switzerland, studying integral equations, orthogonal functions and their relations to almost periodic functions; and in 1935-36 he was on leave as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

During World War II, Professor Franklin was active in teaching and research in ballistics and from 1944 to 1946 served as a consultant in mathematics to Professor Charles S. Draper in the development of the Draper lead-computing gunsight.

His memberships included the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Mathematical Society, the Mathematical Association of America, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi. In 1943, CCNY presented him with its Townsend Harris medal as an alumnus of outstanding postgraduate attainment.

Professor Franklin made his home at 312 Pleasant Street, Belmont. His wife, the former Constance Wiener, is the sister of the late Norbert Wiener. He is survived also by his son, David, of Belmont; his daughter Janet, whose husband, Dr. Vaclav E. Benes, is a mathematician at the Bell Telephone Laboratories; his daughter Hope, whose husband, Dr. Barrett O'Neill, is an alumnus of the Institute and a mathematics professor at the University of California at Los Angeles; and five grandchildren.

There will be a memorial service in the M.I.T. Chapel at 3 p.m. next Sunday, January 31. Participants in the service will be the Reverend Ralph N. Helverson, Minister of the First Parish (Unitarian), Cambridge, and Professor Emeritus George R. Harrison. Members of Professor Franklin's family have asked that flowers be omitted and that contributions be made instead to the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary for the Retina Service Fund.

J. A. STRATTON