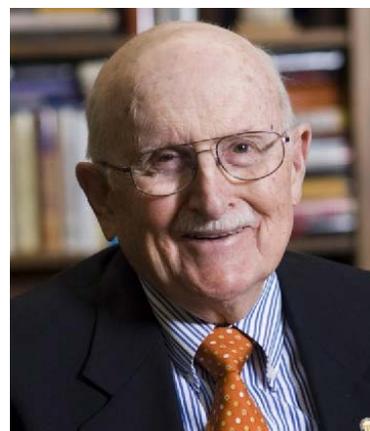


Memorial for Dr. Peter T. Flawn

February 17, 1926 - May 7, 2017

Adapted by Scott W Tinker from Tyrrell E. Flawn Obituary



University president, state geologist, and professor Peter T. Flawn died on May 7, 2017, at the age of 91.

During his historic career in higher education, Dr. Flawn served twice as president of The University of Texas at Austin, as president of The University of Texas at San Antonio, and as State Geologist and Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology.

Peter Tyrrell Flawn was born in Miami, Florida, on February 17, 1926, and grew up in New Jersey, the only child of a London-born architect and a homemaker. Due to the war, he was offered early admission and a full scholarship at age 16 to Oberlin College, where he earned his bachelor's degree. In Ohio, he met Priscilla Pond, to whom he would be married for 70 years.

During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, after which he earned a MS and Ph.D. in geology from Yale University, finishing in 1951. After seeing a notice on a Yale bulletin board about the Bureau of Economic Geology at The University of Texas, he and Priscilla moved to Austin, making forays into West Texas to map the Trans-Pecos area around Van Horn.

In 1960, he was made Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology and State Geologist of Texas. Inspiring confidence and exuding authority, he rose steadily through the ranks of academia. He was appointed the university's vice president for academic affairs, and in 1972 executive vice president before being tapped to become the second president of The University of Texas at San Antonio. During his five-year tenure there, Flawn presided over many milestones for the young university, including its first commencement and the opening of its main campus in 1975, where he is remembered as a "hands-on" leader and a "familiar figure on the construction site of the new campus."

In 1979, he returned to The University of Texas at Austin as its president and served six years that spanned the university's centennial in 1983. Flawn used the milestone to launch an ambitious capital campaign during which he famously declared a "war on mediocrity," pushing the institution to pursue greater academic rigor and excellence. Upon his retirement in 1985, he was named president emeritus, and the Academic Center was named after him.

Throughout his career, Dr. Flawn collected honors for his work in geology, including election to the National Academy of Engineering (1974), the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal from Yale University (1985), the Ben H. Parker Memorial Medal from the American Institute of Professional Geologists (1989). He served as president the Geological Society of America, the American Geological Institute, and in 1969-70 as president of the Association of American State Geologists.

In 1997, at age 71, Dr. Flawn agreed to serve as president *ad interim* while UT Austin searched for a new leader. During those 10 months, Flawn refused to be a caretaker and instead launched another capital campaign, this time with an unprecedented goal of raising \$1 billion.

In 2000, at the request of incoming Texas State Geologist Scott Tinker, Peter Flawn agreed to serve as the first chair of the newly-formed Bureau Visiting Committee. Said Tinker, “Peter Flawn was a refreshing voice of candor in an ever-murky world of guarded dialog. I did not seek his counsel often, but when I did, I learned that it was wise to listen. He will be greatly missed.”