

Statement in memoriam Thomas H. Crawford (October 22, 1931 - November 1, 2018)

University of Louisville Faculty Senate

December 5, 2018

Professor of chemistry emeritus, Tom Crawford was the 1970-72 University Senate vice-chair and the 1972-73 chair. He was the provost's liaison to the Faculty Senate from 1984 until 1995. He retired in 1998. He died November 1.

Born in 1931, Tom was a Louisville guy—indeed, unusual among the faculty, he was a South End guy. He lived here all his life, excepting four years while he was in the US Navy and a couple of visiting appointments elsewhere. He graduated from DuPont Manual High School while it was a trades-training school. His diploma got him a job in town, where astute supervisors first encouraged him and then (as far as I can tell) insisted that he go to college. He graduated BS in chemistry from UofL in 1958 and finished his doctoral work here in 1961, when he was appointed assistant professor. He was tenured and promoted in 1966. After early research successes, in academic year 1969, he was visiting professor at Cal Tech. When Tech then offered him an associate professorship, he and his spouse Wanda brought their family back to Louisville for good.

He was promoted to professor in 1970, and he returned to teaching and research in the College of Arts & Sciences. Then, throughout his university career, and finally into retirement, he mentored high school students situated as he had been, encouraging them to try out college, promoting their visits to his lab, and leading a regional "science fair" initiative that eventually brought the international competition to Louisville. On campus he remained a classroom favorite to the end of his career, teaching the entry-level chemistry courses because administrative assignments distracted him from higher-level courses and research. Off campus throughout his career and in retirement, he gave hundreds of chemistry demonstrations at Kentucky high schools to recruit STEM students—before it was the fashion to do so.

Tom's administrative career took him from the chemistry department chair to acting dean of Arts & Sciences, associate vice president for academic affairs, associate provost and acting provost. Tom was one of two associate provosts—only two, with no vices—who made up the senior staff. One worked on special projects. Tom's title, according to Provost Mann, was "associate provost for internal and external affairs," implying the very narrow range of university academic business that Tom did not touch.

As associate provost, Tom enjoyed in particular work that is now the bailiwick of the vice provost for faculty affairs. First, he was deeply committed to faculty advancement and welfare, taking special care of safeguards in REDBOOK Chapters Three and Four and in the creation and revision of unit constitutional documents and personnel policies. He vetted every faculty personnel case for appointment, promotion or tenure and, less happily, he worked through every faculty grievance. He drafted the provost's personnel recommendations to the president and board of trustees, and he negotiated the separation of faculty members who left the university for any reason.

His second favorite job was as the provost's liaison to the Faculty Senate, where he regularly sat with the full Senate and its Executive Committee, REDBOOK Committee and the various iterations of the Planning, Budget and Economic Welfare committees. His presence in all these groups was quiet but positive, and he gave great counsel to the senate, its leadership and the individual unit caucuses. He also gave each provost thorough, minutely-detailed accounts of any Senate business proper for them to know, usually hand-written with equally detailed marginalia of doodles and portraits, from which could be inferred how many minutes in any discussion might have been spent otherwise.

In the creation of policy and procedure documents, he was a close editor with a comprehensive memory of prior versions and rejected readings, and he had such respect for language that he didn't use much of it, his memoranda and reports being models of brevity, pith and point that at least one of his successors could never

imitate. Tom didn't willingly type, so at the end of his career he was unhappy with the incursion of PCs on administrators' literal desktops, but long before that he and his assistant Effie Goodwin developed an unfailing and leak-proof system for an invariable five-day, hard-copy response to any inquiry (Day 1, the question arrives by whatever means, and Tom drafts a response overnight; Day 2: Effie types the first-draft note, memo or letter, which Tom edits on day 3; Effie retypes the draft on day 4; and Day 5, Tom signs the final, and she puts it into the campus mail before 10AM. Done).

Tom's commitment to university service was best typified by the sequel to the 1983 resignation of Bill Dorrill, the first provost. Tom was appointed as acting provost during the search although he was himself a candidate for the job, but Wally Mann, dean of dentistry, was appointed. Without fuss, rancor or evident public disappointment, Tom stepped back into the associate's role and continued to serve there until he left office in 1995.

As deeply involved in university teaching and service as he was, the center of Tom's life was his family and his church, as his son Tom and his daughter Sherri Gary, long-time HSC staff member--or anyone who knew him and Wanda--can attest. For decades at his church, Tom served on the board of elders, worked with youth ministry, taught a Sunday school class and gave a Sunday Communion meditation; he was also on the board of the Christian Church Homes of Kentucky, among many other community and church service roles.

Tom was a gentle, smart, thoughtful, thorough, modest, honest and strong fellow, a superlative mentor and friend. By the time I followed him as associate provost, he had taught me every good thing I know about university administration. Thank you for the honor of recalling him at this time.

Dale B. Billingsley
Professor of English