

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### JAMES PERRIN SMITH (1864 – 1931)

James Perrin Smith, Professor of Paleontology, died January first, 1931, six months after his retirement from active academic work.

He was born at Cokesbury, South Carolina, November 27, 1864. He was graduated from Wofford College, South Carolina, in 1884, received the degree of Master of Arts at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee in 1886, and after teaching science for two years in high school, joined the Arkansas Geological Survey under Dr. John Casper Branner. In 1890 he went to Göttingen, Germany, where he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1892. His doctor's thesis was published by the Prussian Geological Survey in 1893.

He joined Dr. Branner in 1892 at Leland Stanford Junior University and shared in the organization of the Department of Geology with which he was identified continuously until his death.

Dr. Smith's scientific investigations dealt chiefly with the fossil, Cephalopoda. He was the foremost authority on the phylogeny of the ammonites and on the paleontology and stratigraphy of the Triassic formations. His scientific writings included seven important monographs and fifty-four shorter contributions. Only a few weeks before his death he read the proof of his final monograph on the Lower Triassic Cephalopoda.

In addition to membership in various scientific societies, he was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences in 1925 and in 1919 received the Mary Clark Thompson gold medal for his investigations on the phylogeny of the ammonites.

His field studies and collecting trips involved hard physical labor in difficult terrains and were financed largely by himself. During this work he developed his love for outdoor life and fishing.

During his earlier years at Stanford he taught all branches of geology, but with the increase in the number of students and faculty he concentrated on paleontology.

His best teaching was by personal conference, and even his lectures were informal. He took a personal interest in each of his students regardless of whether they were talented or mediocre, and his sound advice helped many to complete their college work and enter successful professional careers.

He gave freely of his own material and generously helped his advanced students in order to make their first publications successful. His sound scientific suggestions in branches of geology other than his own were taken up by young investigators, and his industry, scientific honesty, and enthusiasm inspired them in their early work.

The genuine affection of the alumni for "J.P." has not diminished with the passage of years. The oldest graduate still recalls with pleasure the informal sessions on the Quad in front of the geology building, where science, history, politics, and almost any other subject were discussed with shrewd insight by their great teacher and were illustrated by innumerable stories, some of which will live long after him.

He has commanded respect and affection from his colleagues as from his students, and we of the Academic Council hereby express the deep sense of loss which we have suffered in his death.

Be it resolved that this memorial be inscribed on the minutes of the Academic Council and copies transmitted to the Board of Trustees of the University and to the family of Dr. Smith.