

Stephen O'Brien MSc

The association of Stephen O'Brien with University College Dublin dates from 1936 when he came here to study Science and Engineering having won an Entrance Scholarship and first place in Ireland at the Leaving Certificate in Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. He was born on 5 February 1918 and went to school in Co. Kildare, at Knockbeg College, Carlow and at Castleknock College, Dublin. He had an outstanding undergraduate career with first place and first class honours in First Engineering, continuing in Mathematical Science to the B.Sc. Honours Degree in 1939 and the M.Sc. with first class honours in 1940.

He was invited to join the staff as an Assistant in Mathematics and proved to be an excellent teacher whose skilful presentation of difficult mathematical material was warmly appreciated by his students. He taught mathematics to students of all years in the Faculty of Engineering. He also lectured to students in Arts, Science, Commerce and Architecture. From 1951 to 1957 Mr. O'Brien worked also at the School of Theoretical Physics of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, first as a part-time Scholar and later as a Research Associate.

There he collaborated with the Director of the School, Professor J.L. Synge, in writing two papers published, one in the *Communications of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies* and the other in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. Mr. O'Brien also wrote a section of *Modern Mathematics for Teachers*, the textbook on the modernisation of school mathematics by members of the Mathematics staff of the College published in 1964.

Mr. O'Brien accomplished significant work in the revision and extension of Mathematics courses in the Faculty of Engineering in the 1960's. He was a member of the Irish Applied Mathematics Study Group established by OECD in 1963 which prepared a report on "Mathematics for Engineers" for an International Working Seminar in Paris in 1965. Over the past ten years or so, he developed a great interest in computers and their potential in addressing mathematical questions; he recognised the benefits of training mathematics students in computer usage. He has very successfully incorporated an element of computer training into the general Arts mathematics programme. He has also been active in various associations of mathematicians and teachers of mathematics in Ireland and abroad, and a participant at international conferences and seminars.

Having been a College Lecturer since 1964, he was appointed Associate Professor of Mathematics (Applied Mathematics) in 1966. A member of the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Arts and the Academic Council.

Professor O'Brien has been a dedicated staff member. He retired on 30 September 1987 and takes with him the thanks of the College and the warm good wishes of large numbers of the staff in all areas to whom he is well known. May he and Mary, his wife, have many more years of happiness.

