Teacher. Outstanding gentleman. Colleague. Great man. Friend. Mentor. Tremendous individual. B.L. Allen was many things, but mere words cannot do justice to the amazing impact he had on his students, his peers, and Texas Tech University.

Allen was born in Hillsboro, Texas on August 11, 1923. He transferred to Texas Tech University from Hill College shortly before World War II. He took a three year leave of absence to serve his country in the South Pacific and Philippines, returning to Texas Tech after the war to complete his bachelor’s degree in agronomy.

Allen taught briefly at Eastern New Mexico University Portales before receiving his master’s and doctoral degrees from Michigan State University. He returned to Texas Tech as an assistant professor in the fall of 1959.

While at Texas Tech, Allen coached the soils judging team for forty years, leading them to five national contest victories, as well as 35 first, second or third place regional wins. Allen was a member of several organizations, and contributed 10 book chapters and 20 refereed articles to the study of soil. While his awards were many and his résumé impressive, he will be best remembered by those who knew him.

Marvin Cepica, a former dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas Tech, met Allen when Cepica took his soils class as an undergraduate student at Texas Tech. He knew him later as a faculty member, and his respect and esteem for Allen only grew over the years.

“He was a great example of professionalism. His work ethic was unsurpassed,” Cepica said. “His knowledge of his field of study was superior, and his love for students and teaching enduring.”

Cepica said he considered Allen to be a great individual who made an amazing contribution to the world and was loved by many.

Dr. Wayne Hudnall, the B. L. Allen Endowed Chair for Pedology, credits Allen as the influence that caused him pursue a degree in the soil sciences.

“I finished a master’s with him, and then came back as a B. L. Allen Endowed Chair,” Hudnall said. “It’s really his influence that got me to where I am today.”

Even though Allen retired almost a decade ago, he never stopped influencing or teaching those around him. Before his death on March 24, 2012, he was still serving on committees for master’s and doctoral students and helping students with their writing and working with them to help ensure their research got published.

This dedication, former dean John Abernathy said, is what makes an exemplary faculty member and person.

“Dr. Allen exemplified the epitome of what a faculty member should be,” Abernathy said. “He was one of the most outstanding individuals I’ve ever known. He cared about his students, others, the university, and he took pride in everything he did.”

Allen was many things to many people, but it is clear he was also one thing to no one: replaceable.