If you ever walked the halls in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education over the past 45 years you would have had the honor to meet Dr. Kathy Fite. Monday through Friday, rain or shine, Kathy greeted everyone with a smile and an enthusiastic comment like “Your assignment was excellent!” or “Congratulations on your award!” She was the sunshine in our dark hallway! She made everyone feel good about themselves and reminded you that teaching was the most important career in the world! And even though Dr. Kathy Fite has officially retired from Texas State University after 47 years, her positive energy, commitment to children, and her love will forever remain in the hallways and in our hearts!

Dr. Kathy Fite graduated from Southwest Texas State College in 1969 with a degree in Elementary Education and completed her M.Ed. in Elementary Education in 1970. She went on to be a kindergarten teacher in Houston and then moved to Denton, Texas to complete her doctorate degree from North Texas University. In 1973, Dr. Fite was hired as an Assistant Professor in Curriculum and Instruction at Southwest Texas State College. She committed her life to working with teachers and undergraduate and doctoral level students.

Since the early days of her career, Dr. Fite worked in schools and on state, regional, national, and international projects, frequently going to Washington, D.C. to help write educational policies for early childhood education. As you can imagine, Dr. Fite has received numerous awards including the Everett Swinney Excellence in Teaching Award, Past President of the Texas State University Alumni Association, Strutters Always Alumni Board, Past President and Strutters Hall of Fame. Community in Schools Lifetime Achievement Award, and the International Ambassador for the Decade of the Child from the Association of Childhood Education International just to name just few. In addition to serving in numerous leadership positions at Texas State and internationally, Dr. Fite was a highly recognized scholar. She published books, text books, book chapters, websites, journal articles, magazine articles, newsletters, and policy white papers. She collaborated with numerous colleagues and enjoyed bridging her expertise with new learning and teaching theories. Some of Dr. Fite’s service included: Founder and Director of Bobcat Buddies a volunteer program with San Marcos, CISD; Phi Delta Kappa First Woman President at SWT, Guest Editor of Early Childhood Educators, Texas State Faculty Senator, and Director of Sponsored Projects.

Dr. Kathy Fite’s life’s work as a teacher educator and early childhood researcher will forever impact our professional lives and the lives of past and future teachers. Dr. Fite will be missed, but rest assured, adventure awaits as she spends the next part of her life relaxing and traveling the world. We are grateful and wish her the best in retirement.