Browns Give $500,000 To Establish Thomas Chair In Political Science

By RICHARD BEST
Thresher Reporter

With a gift of half a million dollars, the Brown Foundation has established a Chair of Political Science at Rice in honor of U.S. Representative Albert Thomas, President Kenneth S. Pitzer announced in mid-summer.

At that time he stated the fund would enable the University to bring to the campus an eminent scholar in the field and thus further strengthen a rapidly expanding faculty in this important area of the humanities.

Thomas, a Rice alumnus, has stated that at the University he was a “better handshaker than student.” Elected to the Congress in 1936, Thomas has established a reputation not as a spectacular orator but as an effective committeeman.

Votes Liberal

Since 1941 he has served as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, eventually becoming the second ranking member. His influence was essential in locating the Man- ned Spacecraft Center in Houston.

Thomas has maintained a voting record which might be described as liberal for Texas. In recent years, he has supported stronger civil rights legislation and has been among the small minority of this state’s Congressmen who have voted for the main proposals of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

On November 21, 1963 the late Mr. Kennedy, speaking before a Houston dinner honoring Thomas, praised him as “a man old enough to dream dreams and young enough to see visions.”

Gave College

The Brown Foundation, established in 1951 by the late Mr. and Mrs. Herman Brown and Mr. and Mrs. George R. Brown, has also given Rice $1 million to build the Margaret Root Brown College. Mr. George Brown, a member of the Foundation and Chairman of the Rice Board of Trustees, commented that “it is fitting that Rice should honor its alumnus Albert Thomas by establishing a professorship in political science … the science of politics … that he practiced so well for the benefit of Houston and the nation.”

It is expected that the Chair will be given to a man of national reputation. As of now, however, History Department sources indicated that a preliminary survey of possible candidates has only been begun by the committee responsible for the nomination.