

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
DAVID L. HUFF**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for David L. Huff, professor emeritus, geography and the environment, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Hillary Hart, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

**IN MEMORIAM
DAVID L. HUFF**

The University of Texas at Austin, the McCombs School of Business, the Department of Geography and the Environment lost an esteemed colleague when David L. Huff died on August 15, 2014. David was born on April 30, 1931, in Tennessee and spent his boyhood in Oregon. He obtained his B.S. degree at the University of Oregon then an M.B.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Washington. At Washington, he became interested in the emerging field of quantitative geography; although Huff's doctorate was in marketing, his dissertation supervisor was geographer William L. Garrison. He was also influenced by the work of Brian Berry, Duane Marble, and John D. Nystuen among other early analytic economic geographers, as well as by game theorists and rational choice theorists. His dissertation work on modeling retail trips was published in 1963.

His first teaching position was at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); while there he published an article outlining the Huff Model, an important contribution to understanding choice behavior in market research and planning. It is based on the premise that when a person is confronted with a set of alternatives, the probability that any particular item will be selected is directly proportional to the perceived utility of each alternative. The Huff Model was not a "gravity model;" distance decay was combined with many other non-spatial factors to determine attractiveness. The Huff Model captures the complexities of the competitive retail landscape and can be used to generate alternative scenarios. The Huff Model – and hundreds of other models based on it – have been used for more than fifty years by market analysts and planners, and continue to be useful to locate convenience stores, shopping malls, and other retail establishments, as well as to forecast sales. The Model has been included in many textbooks and classes, and has been incorporated into geographical information systems (GIS).

While at UCLA, Huff gained a Fulbright Lectureship at the Université d'Aix-Marseille in France. After a brief stint as director of the Center for Regional Studies at the University of Kansas, David was hired in 1968 by The University of Texas as professor of resources, geography and marketing. At Texas, David was awarded a Century Club Centennial Professorship and served as director of Research in the Bureau of Business Research, while continuing to publish numerous books, chapters, and articles, and presenting at scholarly conferences, in the fields of geography, consumer research, management, marketing, economics, regional science, and systems research.

David taught courses in economic geography and published a variety of articles on the subject, beginning with an article on gravity models in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (AAG) in 1968 and continuing with articles on ghettos and black employment, political unrest in Africa, Ireland's urban system, and state innovation in economic geography. He was active in the International Geographical Union and received the AAG's Anderson Medal in Applied Geography. As the holder of a joint appointment with the Department of Geography and the Environment, and a member of its Graduate Studies Committee, Huff supervised one master's thesis and three Ph.D. dissertations in geography. The latter included Diana R. DeAre, Barbara Becker, and Richard G. Boehm, for many years chair of the Department of Geography at Texas State University. Professor Boehm writes that, "when I have been asked about his legacy I have often remarked that

he taught his students as much outside of the classroom as in. He was unselfish with his time and he treated his students with respect and dignity.”

In addition to his work in academia, David consulted for dozens of agencies including the U.S. Department of Transportation, Resources for the Future, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Bureau of the Census, and National Endowment for the Arts as well as for numerous state and regional offices. He has advised hundreds of business firms on various aspects of market area analysis, and served as an Esri technical advisor, using his expertise to develop advanced predictive models in business analysis.

David received the Business School’s Jack Taylor Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award in 1981 and won the National Council for Geographic Education’s Distinguished Mentor Award for his contributions to geographic education at the graduate level in 1977. He served on the editorial review boards of the *Professional Geographer* and *Applied Geographic Studies*.

David was also concerned with the environment and, about a decade after his arrival in Texas, acquired the S-Bar-D ranch in San Saba county, where he raised Murray Grey cattle and designed conservation projects. In 2007, David was diagnosed with Lewy Body Disease, and confronted it forthrightly, participating in a 2012 KUT radio program on the disease. Dr. David L. Huff and his wife Suzanne Huff have left UT Austin a lasting gift: his wife Suzanne has established the David L. Huff Memorial Fellowship for a University graduate student in geography.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Gregory Knapp (chair), William E. Doolittle, and Eli P. Cox III.

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