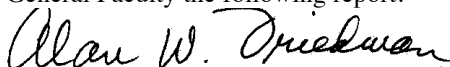


DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
TOM J. MABRY**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Tom J. Mabry, Professor Emeritus, Department of Molecular of Biosciences, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**IN MEMORIAM
TOM J. MABRY**

Tom J. Mabry passed away November 29, 2015, at St. David's Hospital in Austin, Texas. Tom was born June 6, 1932, in Northeast Texas near Commerce. After graduating from high school as valedictorian, Tom attended East Texas State University and earned a B.S. and M.S. degree in Chemistry graduating in 1953. He was then commissioned into the U.S. Air Force, where he served as a research chemist for two years.

Tom earned his Ph.D. degree in Organic Chemistry from Rice University in 1960 and was then awarded a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Zurich. There he solved the structure of the red pigment that is dominant in diverse plants, including the red beet, several cacti and petals of the Bougainvillea flower. He named this new class of pigments "betalains," which are widely distributed in nine different plant families restricted to the Order Caryophyllales. In 1962, he joined the Department of Botany at The [University of Texas](#) at Austin and helped organize a major natural products chemistry program there with the support of faculty colleagues Professors Billy Turner and Ralph Alston. Rapidly attaining international renown, his program received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and several foundations, most notably the Robert A. Welch Foundation, which supported his research continuously for decades.

In 1966, Tom helped establish the Phytochemical Society of North America, and he served as its first President. He was highly respected by his faculty colleagues and became Chairman of the Department of Botany in 1980. Tom led the program through 1986 and during his term as Chairman, the Department became the nation's top ranked Botany Department. As Chairman, he also helped establish several important endowed faculty positions, which continue to benefit the Plant Biology program today.

During his Chairmanship, Tom's leadership was characterized by both graciousness and decisiveness. Although he had little tolerance for the drawn-out meetings administrators sometimes have to attend, he knew how to win from the University the kind of support that was needed to keep the Department ranked number one in the United States. Tom was always pro-active for the Department, yet his successes always seemed effortless, and his graciousness and *joie de vivre* sustained a high morale among the faculty during his entire tenure.

Tom also had a strong interest in biotechnology, which led to his appointment as a Jack C. Wrather Centennial Endowed Fellow at UT Austin's IC² Institute. During his career, Tom received numerous other professional awards both nationally and internationally. These included a year-long Guggenheim Fellowship at the University of Freiburg, Germany, the Alexander von Humboldt Senior Scientist Award for research at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, the American Chemical Society Award for the Application of Chemistry to Food and Agriculture, the Pergamon Phytochemistry Prize, the UT Austin Graduate School's Outstanding Doctoral Teaching Award in 1991, and the American Society of Pharmacognosy's Research Achievement Award. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 2006 after forty-two years of teaching undergraduate and graduate

students and supervising more than seventy Ph.D. and M.S. students. The research of his laboratory led to more than seven hundred publications including fifteen books.

Tom was always modest about his remarkable achievements, attributing his success to “the luck of pursuing the right projects with the right people at the right time.” Clearly, however, his accomplishments came from his own intense efforts. His spirit continues to inspire the many students and faculty who were lucky enough to know him.

He is survived by his wife Helga Johanna Humm Mabry; daughter Michele Mabry Cooley and her husband Tillman Webb Cooley III and their twin sons William Sumner and Thomas Mabry; son Patrick Thomas Mabry and his daughter Cassandra Carolina; and his mother-in-law, Elisabeth Humm. Tom will be deeply missed by his immediate family, his academic family and colleagues, and his many friends.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Stanley J. Roux (chair), Malcolm R. Brown Jr., and David L. Herrin.

Distributed to the dean of College of Natural Sciences on February 9, 2017, and posted under “Memorial Resolutions” at <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/facultycouncil/Wiki+Home>.