

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
LAWRENCE CHARLES SHEPLEY**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Professor Emeritus Lawrence Charles Shepley, Department of Physics, 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  
LAWRENCE CHARLES SHEPLEY**

Lawrence Charles "Larry" Shepley was born August 11, 1939, in Washington D.C., to Jack Mandel and Ida Bernstein Shepley. Larry's father was a licensed civil, electrical, and structural engineer who worked for the Federal Power Commission, where he participated in the licensing of many of the large dams on U.S. navigable rivers. Larry attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington, DC, where he excelled in science and mathematics. Larry graduated from Swarthmore College with a bachelor's degree in physics in 1961. He earned a master's degree and a doctorate in physics in 1963 and 1965 from Princeton University, where he studied under John Archibald Wheeler and Charles W. Misner. His dissertation was entitled "SO(3, R)-Homogeneous Cosmologies." Following a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley, under Abraham H. Taub, Larry joined the Department of Physics at The University of Texas at Austin in 1967 as an Assistant Professor and, in 1970, was promoted to Associate Professor.

In 1975, Professor Shepley was among a number of politically active UT Austin professors who sued the University and then UT Austin President Lorene Rogers, alleging they were denied full salary increases for which they had been recommended, in retaliation for their political activities. Shepley was active in TACT and AAUP at that time. A Texas district court initially ruled in favor of the University, but the group appealed on the grounds that they had been discriminated against and denied First Amendment rights, and the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court initially agreed in 1981. However, that court eventually found against Professor Shepley. With this outcome, Professor Shepley vowed not to cooperate with administration requirements at UT Austin. In particular, he would not provide the extensive documentation required for advancement to full Professor. He retired from The University of Texas at Austin in 1995 as an Associate Professor, and was granted emeritus status only years later. Despite his view of his treatment by the administration, Professor Shepley served the Department of Physics in numerous capacities: Vice-Chair for Graduate Affairs and Graduate Adviser, Associate Director of the Center for Relativity, Departmental Minority Liaison Officer, Chair of the Teaching Assistant's Committee, and other advisory roles. He was the Chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee of the College of Natural Sciences. He taught classes at all levels, from basic freshman physics for non-science students to specialized graduate courses.

In addition, Professor Shepley served as a member of the organizing committee of the Texas Symposia on Relativistic Astrophysics, as an instructor at the Curso Centroamericano y del Caribe de Fisica, and as a member of the American Physical Society Committee on Civil Defense. He authored or co-authored/edited over fifty scholarly articles and four books. Even after his retirement in 1995, Professor Shepley continued to be active, serving as Chair of the Texas Section of the American Physical Society and as State Contest Director of the University Interscholastic League.

Larry was a longtime member of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin, serving as a board member and President. Larry loved to travel, visiting all continents, including Antarctica. He died of congestive heart failure

on December 30, 2016. He is survived by his sister, Lona Piatigorsky, her husband, Joram, their two sons and their grandchildren, and by many friends. At his request, there were no memorial services or ceremonies and no solicitations in his memory. Larry's final sentiments, in his own style, were, "Farewell and Good Luck."

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors M. E. L. Oakes (Chair), Cecie Dewitt, and Richard Matzner.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences on July 13, 2017, and posted under "Memorial Resolutions" at <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/facultycouncil/Wiki+Home>.