The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Benjamin M. Harris, professor emeritus, College of Education, Department of Educational Administration, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Dean P. Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

**IN MEMORIAM**
**BENJAMIN M. HARRIS**

Benjamin M. Harris, affectionately known as Ben, was the M. K. Hage, professor emeritus in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education. He was born in Chicago, Illinois, on February 8, 1923. He graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles obtaining both a bachelor in art and economics in 1948 and a master of education in curriculum and instruction in 1951. Later he graduated with a Doctor of Education degree from the University of California at Berkeley in administration, supervision and curriculum in 1958. He was married to Mary Lee Christian for over fifty years. Together they raised two children: Tamara and Kim.

Ben began his stellar professor career, in 1958, joining a small group of faculty to form the roots of the Department of Educational Administration and contributed to its development into one of the most distinguished national programs charged with preparing all levels of educational leaders. During his tenure, he was the conscience, ethical, and moral compass of the department. As the department added distinguished faculty and elite, selected students, Ben insisted that the mission of the department be to develop educational leaders who would guide schools for the betterment of all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, linguistic status, or disability circumstance. The department responded to his insistence by consistently awarding more doctorate degrees to students of color than any other academic unit in the University.

Ben was a demanding, strict, yet supportive professor. His standards were high and non-negotiable. There was no such thing as an easy “A” in courses that Dr. Harris taught. His use of “hands on” simulation and clinical experiences resulted in exceptional learning for his students. While Ben was on one of the many trips he made supporting the international development of instructional supervision, he was a passenger on a plane that was hijacked by terrorists. Students later joked that Dr. Harris was released by the terrorists, “because they could not meet his high standards.”

The national and international contributions and scholarly work of Ben Harris produced highly regarded books and relevant practitioner materials that supported and directed training and research for instructional supervision. His work had and continues to have profound impact on the field, bringing a spotlight upon The University of Texas at Austin as a center of research and edge-cutting practice associated with instructional supervision. He was also founder and president of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS), a national professional organization dedicated to the development and dissemination of research on instructional supervision. After more than forty years, COPIS continues to be the only forum that brings together professors and scholars focused on advancing the field of instructional supervision and instructional leadership.

Ben was critical to the development of some of the most important and contributing educational leaders for the state of Texas and the nation. Individuals that were mentored by Ben became commissioners of education,
superintendents of schools, executive directors of educational service centers, and executive directors or presidents of major professional organizations, university professors, and key political leaders. Ben was a remarkable colleague, always rational, deductive, and unusually insightful in his judgment of needs of the Department of Educational Administration. His intelligence, commitment, and courage served the department and University well.

Further, Ben was a gregarious person. His arranging and hosting of many informal social activities leave friends, colleagues, and students with wonderful memories. He well understood that depth of relationships must include interactions that were more than professional, formal contact. He was a life-long lover of country music and dancing. He also spent his last years as music director for the Round Rock Senior Citizen Center.

A memorial tree for Ben Harris has been planted on the southeast corner of Sutton Hall on The University of Texas at Austin campus. It is a beautiful, strong tree, with deep roots into the soil of the University. The long-term shade cast by the tree is descriptive of the “deep roots” and enduring professional and personal contributions made by Ben. The discipline of educational administration and instructional supervision, the state of Texas, The University of Texas at Austin, the College of Education, and the Department of Educational Administration significantly benefited from the contributions of Ben Harris.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Marvin L. Hackert, Dean R. Appling and Karen S. Browning.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Education on July 30, 2015, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council.