The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Luis A. Arocena, Professor Emeritus, Spanish and Portuguese, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
LUIS A. AROCENA

A towering figure in the Spanish American world of letters, with specialties in colonial literature and Hispanic intellectual history, Professor Luis A. Arocena commanded respect as a scholar of immense erudition. His books, particularly in the colonial field, brought him international recognition. With these eminent qualifications Professor Arocena gave new dimensions to the study of Latin American Literature and Culture in the Spanish department at The University of Texas where he came in the fall of 1963.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 21, 1914, Professor Arocena spent some of his formative years on a ranch in the pampas, where he grew up in close touch with the gaucho world of Martín Fierro. Later his family moved to Buenos Aires where he attended school and took a degree in history at the Instituto Superior del Profesorado, 1937. In 1957 he earned a doctorate degree in history, summa cum laude, at the University of Madrid in Spain.

Luis Arocena embarked on his career as a university professor at the University of Buenos Aires. During the time of the Perón dictatorship in Argentina, he went into exile, first to Venezuela, where he taught at the University of Caracas (1946-1948), and then to the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan (1948-1958). He returned to the University of Buenos Aires where he served from 1958 to 1963. During the sixties he became one of the founding members of the prestigious University of Buenos Aires Press (Eudeba). In addition to his teaching at the University of Buenos Aires, he rose in the administration to the rank of chairman of the history department. While in Puerto Rico he had met and become friends with the Spanish scholar and professor Ricardo Gullón who, in 1963, was instrumental in bringing him to The University of Texas at Austin. Here Arocena served as professor of Spanish in what was then the Department of Romance Languages and now is the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. In 1989, after twenty-six years of service, he retired at age 75.

At UT Professor Arocena regularly taught an undergraduate course in Introduction to Spanish American Culture and Civilization and graduate seminars such as El Ensayo Latinoamericano, Las Crónicas Coloniales, Teoría de la Historiografía Indiana, and from Spain, Unamuno, but more often topics from Spanish America. Each graduate course was carefully planned and thoughtfully presented. He also served as graduate advisor for five years (1979-1984). Deeply interested in the welfare of the students, he undertook this task with his usual brio, dedication, and industriousness. His door was always open to students and colleagues for consultation or just a friendly chat.

Professor Arocena played a lively part during his years at The University of Texas. For example, he helped with the presentation of a week-long celebration held in February, 1967, honoring the 100th anniversary of the birth of the renowned Latin American poet Rubén Darío, and in 1972 he organized a symposium celebrating the centennial of Argentina’s famous 19th century poem, Martín Fierro. Thanks to Professor Arocena, a number of prestigious Argentine scholars attended this milestone gathering, for Luis Arocena had the uncommon quality of gathering people around him to learn, to talk, and to laugh. Testament to this
is his colleagues and students continually bringing up his anecdotes and remembering his wisdom and wit.

Among his publications, the most significant is his book *Antonio de Solís, cronista indiano: Estudio sobre las formas historiográficas del barroco* (1963). He had presented an earlier version of his research on Solís as the subject of his doctoral dissertation. With this book Arocena cemented his fame in the River Platte area and throughout Latin America as a distinguished investigator of the 17th century, a crucial period in the history of Spain and the Americas, and very importantly, he contributed a fresh new reading of this chronicler. Interestingly, the last book Professor Arocena published in 1992 was *Historia de la conquista de México, población y progresos de la América Septentrional, conocida con el nombre de Nueva España*, a critical edition and monumental study complementing his earlier work on Solís y Ribadeneyra.

Other significant Arocena publications fall into the category of long essays or short books like *El Inca Garcilaso y el humanismo renacentista* (1949), *El maquiavelismo de Maquiavelo* (1975), *El otro Maquiavelo* (1980), and *Unamuno, sentidor paradojal* (1981). All of these studies are filled with Arocena’s keen humor and vast erudition. *El príncipe de Maquiavelo* (1955), *Las cartas privadas de Nicolás Maquiavelo* (1979), and *La relación de Pero Sancho* (1986) are excellent critical editions. During his last years Professor Arocena was assiduously at work on another ambitious project to crown his scholarly achievements, a complete annotated edition of Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s renowned 16th century chronicle, *La Verdadera Historia de la Conquista de la Nueva España*. He left this mammoth volume to be finished posthumously by his student, Professor Angel Delgado.

Luis Arocena offered his last seminar in the spring of 1989. It was a monographic course devoted to the study and analysis of *Martín Fierro*. This “ultimo curso” was a tour de force, an undisputable event attended by present and past students and auditors.

Professor Luis A. Arocena died on April 16, 1993, after a long and valiant battle with cancer. Survivors at the time of his death included his widow, Amalia, who died in 1998, and five children: two in Buenos Aires, Luis Rodolfo and Inés, and three in the United States, Martín of Austin, Texas, Fernando and Amalia of Washington, D.C., ten grandchildren, and also many students in this country and abroad who carry on his work.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors George Schade (chair), Enrique Fierro, and Yolanda Solé.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on December 16, 1999. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under “Memorials” at: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/