REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
CHARLES M. BONJEAN

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Charles M. Bonjean, professor emeritus, sociology, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
CHARLES M. BONJEAN

Dr. Charles “Chuck” Bonjean, 72, a beloved member of the Department of Sociology at The University of Texas at Austin and retired executive director of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at UT, died February 20, 2008, in Florida of natural causes. He had moved from Austin to Florida in his last days to be near family.

Bonjean was a noted sociologist, scholar, philanthropist, educator, and administrator whose career spanned more than 40 years with UT. He also was a talented pianist and jazz devotee who enjoyed playing music with friends.

Bonjean came to UT in 1963 as an assistant professor with the Department of Sociology and spent his entire career there. He was promoted to associate professor in 1966 and to professor in 1970. He was chair of the department from 1972-74, when he was appointed Hogg Professor of Sociology, a position he held until he retired in 2002.

As a sociologist, Bonjean’s academic interests encompassed formal organizations, sociology of the community, evaluation research, and mental health. He was a prolific researcher, writer, and editor whose name appeared as author, co-author, or contributor to more than 65 books, articles, chapters, and book reviews. Many of his articles appeared in such prominent journals as the American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, Urban Affairs Quarterly, Sex Roles, Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences, Sociological Quarterly, Work and Occupations, Journal of Politics, Contemporary Sociology, and Sociology of Education.

Bonjean first joined the American Sociological Association (ASA) during his graduate student days at the University of North Carolina. He was elected to ASA Council in 1985-88. He served on or chaired two-dozen different ASA committees, including the Committee on Nominations, the Executive Office and Budget Committee, the Minority Opportunity Summer Training (MOST) Program Committee, the Council Subcommittee on Relations with Sections, the Council Subcommittee on Program Reorganization, the Council Subcommittee on Sociological Practice, and the Minority Fellowship Committee. Bonjean served terms as chair of the Council Subcommittee on Women and Minorities, as chair of the Committee on Association Reorganization, and as chair of the Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award Selection Committee.

Those who worked with Chuck on the MOST project know how central his humor and enthusiasm for all things Texas was to this work. He created a tradition of giving task force members highly personalized t-shirts, encouraged endless jokes and bantering, and welcomed members on numerous occasions to his home and his boat on Lake Travis outside of Austin. There was nothing he liked better than club-crawling along Austin’s infamous 6th Street where he would introduce people to the diverse music of that fun-loving community. Chuck loved sociology, he loved working, he loved music, he loved Texas, and he lived his good times with friends.

Bonjean served as editor of a number of academic and professional journals and publications. He was the editor of Social Science Quarterly (SSQ) from 1966-1993. When he became the editor, the journal was but a small regional publication known then as the Southwestern Social Science Quarterly. In 1968, behind Bonjean’s leadership, the journal changed its name and soon became a nationally visible, highly regarded journal. It may
have been one of the first social science journals to publish research dealing with Hispanics. As an editor, Chuck was known for his detailed reviews and the help he gave authors to improve their work. And he always promised to send three reviews within six weeks of the date the manuscript was submitted to SSQ. More often than not, he was able to fulfill this promise. He nurtured many young sociologists in his role as editor, colleague, and friend. Along with the journal, Chuck served in many positions of the Southwestern Social Science Association (SSSA) and was its president in 1994-95. He helped establish the present excellent reputation of the SSSA.

In the early 1970s, the UT sociology department was not as large as it is today. Like many University departments at that time, the department had an abundance of assistant professors. Bonjean had just been promoted to full professor in 1970 so was one of the role models in the department for the younger assistant professors. He was always accessible on campus and also was known for the exciting parties he would throw at his home overlooking Lake Travis.

In addition to his role as an educator, Bonjean joined the Hogg Foundation in 1974 as executive associate and was promoted to vice president in 1979. He served as the foundation’s executive director from 1993-2002 and was only the third person to hold that position since the foundation’s inception in 1940.

Chuck loved to travel and was on the road more than 100 nights each year in connection with his Hogg Foundation and other responsibilities. He traveled the world in his free time and was one of only a handful of “two-million milers” with Delta Airlines.

Bonjean served on boards and committees of numerous national, state, and local philanthropic and professional organizations, including the Council on Foundations, Grantmakers in Health, the Center for Nonprofit Organization Management, Grantmakers Evaluation Network, American Sociological Foundation, Southwestern Social Science Association, Conference of Southwest Foundations, Mental Health Association of Texas, Texas Grantmakers in Health and Human Services, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Mental Health Association of Greater Houston, and the Greater Houston Collaborative for Children.

At the University, Bonjean served on the Faculty Senate, the University Council, the University Public Lectures Committee, the University Research Institute and the Publications Policies Committee. He also was a consultant and advisor to the University’s Department of Journalism, School of Nursing, and School of Social Work.

His honorary affiliations included Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa, Kappa Tau Alpha, and Sigma Delta Chi. He received numerous awards, including the Sigma Delta Chi Scholarship Award in 1957, The University of Texas Students’ Association Teaching Excellence Award in 1965, the Drake University Alumni Distinguished Service Award in 1979, the Association of Junior Leagues’ Award for Voluntary Association Organizational Self-Assessment in 1983, and the Southwestern Social Science Association’s Outstanding Service Award twice, in 1984 and 1991.

Bonjean received a doctorate in sociology from the University of North Carolina, a master’s degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina, and a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Drake University.

If one thing stood out about Chuck above all else, it was his unique ability to make and remain friends with everyone he met. He is missed by the many hundreds of friends he left behind in Texas, the U.S., and the world.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors E. Mark Warr (chair), Norval D. Glenn, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the executive vice president and provost on May 6, 2008. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, WMB 2.102, F9500. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.