DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
CHARLES CARR CLELAND

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

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
CHARLES CARR CLELAND

Charles Carr Cleland was born in Murphysboro, Illinois, on May 15, 1924, and died in Austin, Texas, on December 6, 2008. He served as an Air Force radio operator during World War II from 1943 to 1946. After the war, he attended Southern Illinois University, obtaining a bachelor of science degree in political science in 1950 and a master's degree in educational psychology in 1951. Later he attended The University of Texas at Austin, and in 1957 received a Ph.D. in educational psychology with a minor in general and industrial management. Subsequently he served as assistant director of Brown Schools in Austin, chief psychologist at Lincoln State School and Austin State School, and superintendent of Abilene State School.

Charles was appointed associate professor of educational psychology at The University of Texas in 1964, and in 1968 was promoted to full professor in the Department of Special Education, while retaining voting membership on the faculties of educational psychology and the Graduate School of Business. Upon his retirement in 1988, he was appointed professor emeritus.

Charles was a proficient researcher and author with over 200 academic publications and books. His research reflected an inquisitive mind, creativity, and a dedication to exploring facets of severe disability, particularly profound mental retardation. Titles of his works as author and co-author reflect a unique perspective and include: “Tool use in profoundly retarded humans,” “Effect of increased space on the social behavior of institutionalized profoundly retarded male adults,” “Multiple births and pathology: A territorial perspective,” and “Territoriality and scent-marking.” Unique titles fail to carry the message that much of Charles’ research, while creative and unique, carried considerable practical implications. For example, his article entitled, “Effect of increased space on the social behavior of profoundly retarded humans,” literally changed the spacing and arrangement of beds in institutions serving persons with profound retardation, thus addressing a serious, historical problem of urine odor in such institutions. He stimulated extensive discussion and research from the nation’s discipline of psychology through a simple letter to the editor of the American Psychologist, suggesting a unique interpretation of Harlow’s famous “wire monkey/terrycloth monkey” research. Charles suggested it was not “softness” but smell that brought a preference for the “terrycloth” monkey by adoptive mother monkeys. His work endures in his books on mental retardation that are still recognized as informative sources for scholars and researchers.

Charles made notable contributions to the practice of psychology as a key operative in the creation and codification of the State of Texas Board of Examiners of Psychologists. The Board brought the practice of psychology in Texas to a standard of professionalism, protection of the public, and respect for the discipline needed and long sought after by professional psychologists.

Fellow faculty, friends, and former students remember him as an unrelenting maverick, and a wonderful colleague and mentor. He was gruff and irascible, yet gentle and caring; he was often frightening and unapproachable, yet unusually gracious and kind. Charles was also courageous in confronting institutional insensitivity. At times, his cynical interpretation of organizational leadership and politics brought caution or review to organization policies and practices. He was a truly unique human being and will be missed by all who knew him.
This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Randall Parker (Chair), Alba Ortiz, and James Yates.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Education, the executive vice president and provost, and the president April 29, 2009. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.