REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR CLARENCE LEE CLINE

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Clarence Lee Cline, Professor, English, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
CLARENCE LEE CLINE

Clarence Lee Cline, longtime professor of English, died July 19, 1998, at age 93. The future teacher, scholar, administrator, philanthropist was born January 6, 1905, the son of Permilla and William Edwin Cline, pharmacist in Belton, Texas. He graduated from Belton High School in 1922 and from Baylor University in 1926. He later entered The University of Texas as a graduate student in English and history. Within a month he was appointed as a part-time teacher in the Department of English, then as always in need of teachers of composition. When he earned his PhD in 1938 he received a full-time appointment. It was still depression time, and Clarence Cline began — or rather continued — the long, slow, ill-paid but ultimately successful climb up the steep academic stairway of the university, a notable achievement for a graduate of his own school. Except for one summer as a visiting professor at Harvard, he was to remain a faithful member of this university for the rest of his life. He was not only a faithful but a grateful member who always felt that he owed the institution the old values of loyalty and hard work and service.

In service, he taught a variety of courses and continued voluntarily to teach freshman composition even after reaching seniority. Particularly noteworthy was a course in Russian Literature in Translation, to prepare for which he taught himself to read Russian so that he could study the texts in their original language. Like all professors he served his time on many departmental and university committees. But his influence was especially felt in his service as chairman of the Department of English, 1949-52 and 1962-68. The second period was a challenging one: the university as well as the larger society was undergoing wrenching changes, although the university, in part through the efforts of its leadership, and in part through the commonsense of its students and faculty, avoided the sometimes riotous and destructive behavior of the sixties. But in a more deliberative fashion, the university and the Department of English under the Cline chairmanship began their transition from enjoying a first-rate regional reputation to enjoying a first-rate national reputation, without losing their strong roots in the state and the region. In the transition, Clarence Cline’s long-range thinking and planning were influential and are still having their effects. They did not, of course, always make him popular, either with a few of the older faculty or with some of the new young whiz kids that he helped to bring in from outside.

Some did not quite know what to make of his strong personality, his conservatism as well as his openness to the new, his insistence on the old standards, and his sometimes sardonic wit (it is revealing that he admired the writing of Benjamin D’Israeli and George Meredith and edited three volumes of Meredith’s letters). But to get to know the department better, he often invited members to evening occasions at his home — today that would be the “one-on-one personal communication” that is supposed to lead to peace and understanding. He even accepted several times the daunting challenge of inviting the entire department, including wives and husbands, to an evening party. Sometimes these social interactions worked, sometimes they did not. One younger faculty member later published a novel, a roman à clef, in which Cline’s evening entertainment offered an easily recognized satiric target. Cline was not a bland and forgettable man.

His achievements were not simply those of an administrator or a departmental mentor. He was a scholar in
his own right, as the list of his publications at the end of this memorial will attest. And those publications were produced while meeting the demands of a busy professional and administrative life. In recognition in part of his scholarly achievements, in 1971 he was appointed Ashbel H. Smith Professor of English, and in 1974-75 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1975 the Department of English and the Humanities Research Center published a festschrift for Cline, Sources for Reinterpretation: The Use of Nineteenth-Century Literary Documents, derived from a symposium held in his honor in October.

He took pride in these honors but that was a part of his pride in the university itself and his relationship to it. For outside of his immediate family — his wife Henriette, their two daughters Patricia and Judith, and the children of those daughters — his greatest affection was for his University of Texas and the future it held out for other students and scholars of the sort he himself had been and was.

The affection was more than sentimental. In his later years the Clines had become people of means, and he used those means generously with the university. Friends who knew him well knew that for years he had given financial support to individual students who needed it to continue in their studies. He never spoke of the support publicly. But as he was able he began a more public generosity with the university itself, making gifts that he hoped would be of future academic benefit. He and his wife Henriette funded the C. L. and Henriette F. Cline Centennial Visiting Professorship in the Humanities. When Dr. H. H. Ransom began the establishment of what came to be known as The Humanities Research Center, Clarence Cline, a personal friend of Dr. Ransom (who had come up through the Department of English), supported the new Center enthusiastically, foreseeing with its founder that it held immense promise for the future of scholarship at the university. Over the years, the Clines contributed to the purchase of the Gutenberg Bible and furnished the Center’s Cline Room. Upon the death of Mrs. Cline in 1972, Clarence established the Henriette F. and Clarence L. Cline Memorial Endowment Fund. And after his own death in 1998, his funds established at the Center the C. L. Cline and Henriette F. Cline Senior Curatorship in British Literature.

In 1975 Cline retired as Ashbel H. Smith Professor of English Emeritus after thirty-seven years of full-time service. But that was hardly the end of his relationship with the university. He had long been a member of a number of university organizations, and he kept up his memberships. He was especially active in the Executive Committee of the Chancellor’s Council of the University of Texas System, of which he had been a founding member, and he took pride in participating in its meetings and deliberations. As his health deteriorated in the last years before his death, naturally he slowed down and withdrew more into his home life. But he still remained the modest, witty, educated, generous — and admitted sometimes grumpy — man that his colleagues and friends had long known. In summary, as Chancellor Harry Ransom said in 1975, Clarence Cline should be thought of in the context of his whole career, “a rare example of complete citizenship in a university.”

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Emeritus Edwin Bowden (chair) and Gerald Langford, and Professor James Garrison.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on February 21, 2000. 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/
The Publications of C. L. Cline

Books


Contributions to Books


[Speech in honor of Mody Boatright], in Mody Boatright, Secretary and Editor 1943-1964 (Austin: Texas Folklore Society, 1965), 7-10.


Articles

Forty-two articles, including fourteen on the D’Israelis and seven on George Meredith.

Translations

“The Lady with the Little Dog,” by Anton Chekhov, Texas Quarterly, 7 (Spring, 1964), 173-185.

Reviews

Seventeen reviews of a variety of books.

For a complete list of publications, see Sources for Reinterpretation: Essays in Honor of C. L. Cline, (The University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 95-101.