DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
FRANKLIN LANIER COX

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for John Franklin Lanier Cox, professor emeritus, business law and education, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
FRANKLIN LANIER COX

Franklin Lanier Cox (Lanier), a distinguished longtime faculty member of The University of Texas with the rank of Ashbel Smith Emeritus Professor of Business Law and Education, passed away January 1, 2002.

Dr. Cox, the youngest of four sons of Lee O. and Susie Ida Cherry Cox, was born January 13, 1916, in Baird, Texas. He was extremely bright and graduated from high school in Harlingen at an early age, entering The University of Texas at Austin in 1930 at the age of 14.

He majored in accounting in the College of Business Administration, receiving a BBA in 1934. He then received an LLB (JD) degree from the School of Law with Highest Honors in 1937.

While a student at UT, Lanier was hitchhiking on the road between Temple and Austin when he was picked up by Helen Francis Davis and her mother. Before reaching his destination, Lanier made a date with Helen. This led to a 1938 marriage that lasted almost sixty-four years. Helen and Lanier had one son, William Lee Cox.

At the ripe age of 21, Lanier was appointed as an assistant professor of business law in the College of Business Administration at The University of Texas. He was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 1941, and to the rank of full professor in 1949. For forty-four years as a full-time faculty member (with two leaves of absence), Lanier served the University as a distinguished teacher, writer, and administrator.

His two leaves of absence are rather notable. The first was a stint in the U.S. Navy during World War II for two and one-half years. He served on the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga, rising to the rank of lieutenant junior grade. The second leave of absence was at the request of his good friend and mentor Logan Wilson (former president of UT) to become the director of the American Council on Education’s Academic Internship Program, headquartered in Washington, D.C., from 1965 through 1966. For the next five years, he served on the advisory committee for the internship program and he chaired the committee for one year.

Lanier’s administrative and committee service was voluminous and outstanding. The following list, although not complete, indicates the respect he was accorded by appointment and election to major committees and administrative bodies:

- Secretary to the General Faculty and Faculty Council (1951-1954)
- Chairman of the Department of Business Services (1950–1952)
- Legal Advisor to the Registrar (1947-1955)
- Vice Chancellor of the University of Texas System (1958-1964)
- Vice President of The University of Texas at Austin
- Assistant to the Chancellor for Academic Affairs (1975)
  (Duties included a review of procedures for handling academic matters and recommendations for improving communications between faculty members and the Board of Regents.)
- Legal Advisor to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ben Barnes (1967)
- Director of the Center for Research in Higher Education (1967-1970)
Dr. Cox also did substantial professional writing. With Eugene W. Nelson and William R. Bandy, he coauthored a textbook entitled *Business Law*. He also penned a major monograph that drew national attention when published by the Southern Regional Education Board—*The Impact of Federal Programs on State Planning and Coordination of Higher Education*. This was the first systematic survey of the impact on states of federal higher education aid programs.

Lanier was in demand as a speaker on school law, and published an article—“What is This Thing Called Due Process?”—in the *Texas Association of School Boards Journal*. He also published three digests: *Digest of Commercial Law*, *Digest of the Law of Contracts*, and *Digest of the Law on Sales and Negotiable Instruments*. Additionally, he authored the front-piece article on the “Securities Regulation” volume of *Vernon’s Texas Annotated Statutes*.

Perhaps more than anyone else, Lanier was responsible for building UT’s business law group (now known as the Legal Environment of Business group) into perhaps the premier group of its kind among the nation’s business schools. Lanier often joked that he took pride in hiring young faculty smarter than himself and watching them prosper under his tutelage.

The aspect of Lanier’s academic career that he loved the most was his teaching. He taught courses in three schools and colleges:

- **College of Business Administration:**
  - Business Law
  - Business Organizations
  - Securities Regulation
  - CPA Law Review
  - Graduate Module in Institutions and Management (MBA core course)

- **College of Education**
  - Graduate School Law

- **School of Law**
  - Legal Accounting
  - Contracts

The press interviewed Lanier upon his appointment as Ashbel Professor in 1980. He said he loved teaching and helping students, even though he acknowledged that teaching “takes a lot of energy.” He said he “always found it exhilarating—I would almost be on a high” at the end of class. For those who knew Lanier, that was quite a statement in and of itself. When asked to compare the 48,000 students then at UT with the 5,000 who were enrolled when he first began teaching in 1937, Lanier said that students were basically the same—“We still have three kinds of students—excellent, good, and indifferent. You’re challenged by the excellent students, of course, but also by the indifferent ones.” He went on to state that when a professor can help an indifferent student “catch fire,” that’s most rewarding.

During his tenure at UT, Lanier received a number of awards for his outstanding teaching and service, even though there were fewer awards given in those days than there are today. His teaching awards included:
• UT Austin Student Government Teaching Award (1959)
• Student Council of College of Business Administration Outstanding Teaching Award (1974)
• Joe D. Beasley Excellence Award for Outstanding Teaching in the Graduate School of Business (1976)

In bestowing this latter award, Dean George Kozmetsky read some student comments, including: “Does an outstanding job of accurately compacting very sticky material for his classes.” “His speaking talents enable him to communicate difficult legal concepts in an incredibly easy to understand manner.” “This is an excellent example of his unselfishness in time and effort toward students.” [From a student who had missed class for whom Lanier spent an hour recreating the class lecture.]

For his outstanding contributions and service to higher education and to The University of Texas, Lanier received the following awards:

• College of Business Administration Foundation Advisory Council Distinguished Academic Contribution Award (1972)
  (This was one of the first such awards given by this organization.)

• Texas Junior College Teachers Association Appreciation Award (1979)
  (This award was given in appreciation for work Lanier did in bringing into accordance with federal law the language contained in a revised paper of the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and University Systems pertaining to academic freedom and responsibility, tenure, and academic due process.)

• CBA Hall of Fame (1987)
  (This is the highest honor given by the college and McCombs School of Business for “exceptional service to education and human betterment, and for distinguished contributions to the University and to the business community.”)

Lanier was a member of numerous honorary and professional organizations. These included:

• Beta Gamma Sigma
• Beta Alpha Psi
• Delta Sigma Pi
• Phi Kappa Phi
• Phi Delta Kappa
• State Bar of Texas

Lanier was always thought of as a serious statesman, but he had a sense of humor. Anyone who saw him use only hand gestures to illustrate in the classroom the legal difference between an employee on a dairy farm and an independent contractor mowing a lawn knows that. Upon his retirement, Lanier was asked what he planned to do, and his response was to return “to working for my wife” in her gift shop, dealing primarily in Oriental and Russian art and antiques.

Lanier is survived by his wife Helen Davis Cox; his son William Lee Cox and wife Ann of Houston; his grandchildren David C. Cox and wife Laurie of Warrenton, Virginia, Catherine L. Radvansky and husband Robert of Houston, and W. Gary Cox and wife Adriana of Austin; and three great-grandchildren.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professor Emeritus Gaylord A. Jentz (chair), and Professors John R. Allison and Robert A. Prentice.

Distributed to the deans of the College of Education and the Red McCombs School of Business, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on May 6, 2002. 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/.