IN MEMORIAM

NEAL CRAIG

In the summer of 1964, at the age of 52, Neal Craig ended a thirty-year career in business, sold his residence in Laredo, and came with his family to Austin to enter the University of Texas as a junior. One of his teachers, a member of this committee, remembers him thus: "He came back to courses and books and classroom routines joyously; it was the fruition of dreams and longings of many years and he reveled in the experience, savoring every moment of it. Always he brought to the readings the wealth of his own varied background, the thoughtful maturity of his mind; soon he was recognized by his younger classmates as a quiet, unassuming, perceptive individual who had a great deal to offer. Frequently after class students would gather around to continue a discussion with Mr. Craig, as they respectfully and deferentially called him."

He came to settle on linguistics as the field he wished to pursue because he felt that of all the social sciences, this dealt most fully and significantly with human beings, not just in the abstract but at the level of personal action. For Neal was abidingly concerned with serving the needs of his fellow man, and he saw linguistics as providing him with the tools to do it. He could marvel with aesthetic delight over the pattern of an isogloss or the formulation of a transformation, but his rich spirit of humanity received its greatest fulfillment when he could use his knowledge, or just his sympathetic understanding, to
help some bewildered UT freshman or a Black student at Huston-Tillotson. He exhibited this same quality in his teaching, for he took delight in transmitting, or sharing, his understandings with students, and liked to share the pleasure of success he had in stirring and waking young minds.

After he completed his M.A. in the spring of 1967, he taught in a Peace Corps training project for a time, and in the fall joined the English Department to teach elementary English linguistics courses and English for foreign students. At the same time he began to teach remedial English courses at Huston-Tillotson College. Shortly thereafter, in response to a cry for help from an assistant dean in the Student Office of the College of Arts and Sciences, he became, as that dean put it, "a valuable and effective counselor. This he did without any remuneration or reduction of teaching load; it was enough that he was needed, that this was an opportunity to be helpful to students who were confused or discouraged or lonely, or who only wanted to talk to someone who would listen in silence and sympathy."

For the final two years of his life, he was Assistant Director of Freshman English. Of his service there, the Director with whom he served (a member of this committee) recalls, "Two things about him most impressed me: his sense of responsibility to his students and to the University and his great courage during an illness which he knew was fatal. He had strong convictions, to which he was quite faithful, but he also had a sense of humor. Living and dying, he deserved respect."
Shortly before his death, after a long and progressively debilitating illness throughout which he continued to work as much as his strength permitted, he wrote to one of us, "For most of my life, I have known myself to be in the hands of the Lord, and I am certainly no less so now than in more promising days. The doctors, I think, have no hope at all for my recovery, at least they offer me none. But like Cyrano de Bergerac, I have no surrender in me, and will flail about with my puny sword, to the last awkward stroke if it comes to that--not as fighting an enemy, but simply as not giving up a contest."

His religious faith shone through his life in all he did and said and, no doubt, made him much of what he was. To have known him was a privilege; to remember him is to remember beauty which he brought into the world and into the lives of those who knew him.

Stephen H. Spurr  
President of the University of Texas at Austin

Forest G. Hill  
Secretary of the General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Arthur Cory, Norman Farmer, James Sledd, J. J. Villarreal, Rudolph Troike and Donald M. Boyd, Chairman.