The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Richard L. Dodge, professor, architecture, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
RICHARD L. DODGE, JR.

Richard Leonard Dodge, Jr., Bartlett Cocke Regents Centennial Professor of Architecture, died Friday, August 10, 2007, after a short illness. He is survived by his wife, Kirsten; his daughter, Aina; his son, Michael; his grandson, Alex; and his sister, Paulette Claver.

Richard was born in Oakland, California, on April 13, 1936, the son of Richard Leonard Dodge and Pauline Koch. He attended Oakland schools and was an active member of St. Paul Lutheran Church. In 1956, he entered the University of California, Berkeley, School of Architecture, where he studied under the influential and prolific architect and writer Charles W. Moore. Moore was to remain an influence throughout Richard’s career. Indeed, Richard spearheaded the effort to bring Moore to UT in 1985, and he was a collaborator with Moore on several wonderful buildings in Austin, including the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center and Moore’s own house in West Austin (now The Charles Moore Center for the Study of Place).

Richard received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Berkeley in 1961 and married Kirsten Atkinson that summer. In October of the same year, one month short of completing his eight year commitment in the Naval Reserves, Richard was called to active duty and sent to Pearl Harbor and then to Vietnam. After he was discharged from the Navy, he returned to the Bay Area, where his daughter, Aina, was born in 1962. He worked in San Francisco for Stone, Marraccini & Patterson before going to graduate school at Yale University. His son, Michael, was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1966. After receiving his Master’s of Architecture degree in 1967, Richard was recruited by Alan Taniguchi to teach architecture at The University of Texas at Austin.

During his distinguished 35-year career at UT, Richard mainly taught Design Studio at all levels. He was loved, and sometimes feared, by students for exactly the same qualities: his honesty, practicality, inventiveness, patience, discipline, and speed of thought. Since Richard could draw like an angel, it came as something of a surprise to his colleagues that he was the first to embrace CAD (computer aided design) in the 1980s. He soon became the school’s undisputed master-teacher of what came to be known as the “Tech-comm” Studio, a required computer-based course, which to this day is taught along the lines he laid down. Possibly more than any other, this course kept UT’s architecture graduates among the most sought after in the nation.

In the 1980s, he was appointed by the president of the University to be the chairman of the ad hoc Building Committee to serve as client and overseer of major additions to and renovations of Battle Hall and Sutton Hall. In this capacity, he was for years the principal organizational, problem-solving, and quality-control force—the only person, it seemed, who knew everything about the building, from how it was being built to how it would be to inhabit.

Without fanfare and what turned out to be years of hard work, Richard went about helping to build an institution, serving as associate dean of the School of Architecture to then-dean Hal Box from 1976 to 1992. He was instrumental in developing the advanced design curriculum, introducing topical studios in energy conservation, handicapped access, urban and transportation system design, as well as devising new interdisciplinary Plan II courses, among others. As associate dean, he scheduled undergraduate and graduate classes, coordinated teaching assignments, allocated space and equipment, organized faculty recruitment, and managed accreditation. In all these activities, he blazed a trail, and saw through to the essence of things; he got
things done and set precedents. He also set up and ran the school’s Professional Residency Program, still thriving today as the entrée to some of the finest practices in the world for our students. Richard also found time to serve as chairman of the University’s Housing and Food Service Committee as well as the Parking and Traffic Policy Committee. He served on many other University-wide committees with the same energy, good humor, inventiveness, patience, and altruism he showed in every engagement. After stepping down from his long tenure as associate dean, Richard was appointed as the first Bartlett Cocke Regents Centennial Professor of Architecture.

In civic public service, Richard vice-chaired the Austin Tomorrow Program, consulted for Senator Lloyd Doggett, the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, and the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners, among many other roles.

Richard and his family lived in the Hemphill Park neighborhood of Austin for many years. At their brightly colored home on the corner of 32nd and Speedway, the Dodges welcomed friends, neighbors, colleagues, and students. In 1990, the family began the move to Utley, Bastrop County, where Richard built a new house and family compound, commuted to the University, and ran a one-man practice serving the surrounding area. Richard was a master of architectural construction and a life-long proponent of efficient and humane design that never trumpeted style. He had a special affection for the honesty and ingenuity of Texas vernacular architecture, qualities that were supremely evident in his own buildings.

In 2000, Richard left teaching (and commuting) to devote himself to family life and his practice in Utley, but within a year, and now professor emeritus, he was back in service in a critical role, commuting by plane to the UT Arlington’s School of Architecture, where he served for a year and a half as interim dean. Once again, he managed accreditation as well as myriad other matters. “Richard Dodge took over the helm of the School at a turbulent time,” the present dean of UT Arlington, Don Gatzke writes, “and did an exceptional job of steadying the course of our School in the brief time he was acting dean.” No one who knew Richard would be surprised at this display of energy and sagacity. Indeed, Richard had been recruited to be a dean elsewhere while he was associate dean at UT, and he always said no. Why? Out of loyalty to his school, his students, his colleagues, and his family in Texas, to be sure, but also out of love for the discipline, practice, and teaching of architecture first-hand, where his heart was.

For all that he did, our school and our University will always be grateful. Richard Dodge’s legacy, both tangible and intangible, survives. A Shumard red oak tree, planted in his honor in April of 2008, grows on the west side of Goldsmith Hall, the architecture building.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Michael Benedikt (chair), Kevin Alter, and Elizabeth Danze.

Distributed to the dean of the School of Architecture, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on November 13, 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/.