The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Rudolph Conrad Doenges, professor emeritus, finance, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary  
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM  
RUDOLPH CONRAD DOENGES

Just a couple of months before he would have celebrated his seventy-first birthday, Rudolph Conrad Doenges passed away in Austin on September 14, 2001. He had served with distinction as teacher, scholar, and administrator since he and his wife, Ellen, came to The University of Texas at Austin in fall 1964.

Conrad was born in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, on December 7, 1930, and reared in Colorado. In an early display of his academic talent, he was valedictorian of his Colorado Springs high school. From there he enrolled in Harvard College, graduating magna cum laude in history in 1952. He remained in Cambridge for another two years, earning an MBA in finance and marketing from the Harvard Business School in 1954, which enabled him to add Beta Gamma Sigma, Sigma Iota Epsilon, and Phi Kappa Phi memberships to his Phi Beta Kappa key.

Following a brief stint as a marketing analyst for Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan, he entered active duty in the Supply Corps of the U.S. Navy. He received his officer’s commission in 1955. Following the end of active duty in 1958, he continued as a member of the U.S. Naval Reserve until retiring with the rank of commander in 1979. The end of his period on active duty permitted him to participate in a number of consulting and other business activities, including his family’s Colorado firms, until he entered the graduate program of the University of Colorado in 1962. His advanced graduate studies at CU were supported by fellowships from both that university and the Stonier Foundation, and to complete his doctoral work he received a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship. With that background he was attracted to The University of Texas in 1964. This was the beginning of a mutually beneficial and congenial relationship from which he never departed.

His advancement through the academic ranks at UT was both steady and inevitable. He quickly earned a reputation as a superlative teacher, whether at the undergraduate, graduate, or executive education levels. He received the College of Business Administration (CBA) Student Council Award in 1970; became the first recipient in 1973 of the coveted (then and now) Joe D. Beasley Award for Teaching Excellence in the Graduate School of Business; was named the “Eyes of Texas” Excellence Award winner in 1991; and was his department’s nominee for too many teaching awards to list. In 1983 he became the Arthur Andersen & Company Centennial Professor of Finance. He held visiting professorships at the Graduate School of Business of the University of Stellenbosch (Republic of South Africa) and at the McIntire School of Commerce of the University of Virginia.

His scholarship was noteworthy, resulting in several CBA development grants and research assignments, including funded support from the Universities of Stellenbosch, Virginia, and Houston. He produced many published articles and working papers. As much as his eminent stature rested on teaching and research, he was at least as widely praised for his service contribution, both within and outside the University. His committee work extended far beyond memberships on the University-wide Educational Policy Committee, the Armed Forces ROTC Appointment Review Committee in the College of Liberal Arts, and business school committees. He served for eight years as a member of the General Board of Pensions of the United Methodist Church (with its $5 billion portfolio); assisted the Ex-Students Association’s Texas Excellence Scholarship Review
Committee; and was a member of the Board of Trustees of Denver’s School of Theology. Transcending all these contributions and accomplishments was the quality of his commitments as a husband and father. He and Ellen raised three talented and devoted sons, Curt (1966), John (1969), and Will (1973).

An even greater service contribution to the college and Graduate School of Business came from the various administrative positions he was persuaded to hold by a succession of four deans. From 1972 to 1976, he was the school’s associate dean, with responsibilities for three master’s degree programs. The following four years he chaired the finance department, putting him at the heart of a period in which there were significant increases in enrollment and all other dimensions of student/faculty activities. In January 1987, he again accepted a challenge that was to engage him for the next decade and which, according to many informed observers, was the crown of his career — the associate deanship for undergraduate programs. At the end of those ten years of service — a period of extraordinary growth and change — Dr. Robert G. May, the last dean under whom Conrad served, included the following in his announcement of the completion of Conrad’s administrative appointment:

The undergraduate program under Conrad’s tenure has undergone significant changes in recent years, and now ranks in the top five according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Conrad’s leadership and administrative skills have played a major role in the program’s enhanced rankings. He oversaw the process of downsizing the program and the shift in emphasis from screening out unqualified students to embracing and meeting the needs of highly qualified students admitted as freshmen. He has developed and staffed the Dean’s Office with a team of professionals who deliver student services of the highest quality. Perhaps even more important, Conrad has a keen sensitivity to students... He applies our high standards, but also seeks solutions to students’ problems in a most non- bureaucratic fashion.

In the spring of 1997, Conrad announced his retirement from the faculty and began the University’s three-year phased retirement program. Regrettably, his declining health did not permit him to complete that program, and his death followed shortly after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, D.C. That tragedy carried a special irony for Conrad’s many friends and family; for on an earlier “Day of Infamy,” December 7, 1941, Conrad had celebrated his eleventh birthday.

Seldom has a faculty colleague, by virtue of both his academic competence and his unswerving personal integrity, earned such high respect as that bestowed upon him by all who knew him.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Robert D. Mettlen (chair) and Beverly L. Hadaway, and Dean Arthur T. Allert.

Distributed to the Dean of the Red McCombs School of Business, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on February 19, 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/.
On Tuesday evening last week, as did many of you, I was attending a prayer service at my own Methodist Church in Northwest Hills. It struck me then that the tragedy to which our thoughts were glued was about to be painfully compounded because I was cognizant of the impending loss of my dear friend for nearly forty years, Conrad Doenges. Throughout that day and thereafter I often heard references to Pearl Harbor — and I was aware of the sad irony that Conrad’s birthday was December 7 — a date on our calendar that, on Conrad’s eleventh birthday, we began calling a day of infamy.

But during that prayer service my pastor, Bill Henderson, included in the scripture readings he shared with us, the first two verses — very familiar and comforting verses — from the fourteenth chapter of John’s Gospel. Listen to them again, with me. They are the words of Jesus:

Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

The translation from which I have just read is the original King James version of the Bible. Various subsequent translations refer, instead of to mansions, to dwelling places or to heavenly rooms. And last week, when I heard these verses, I began thinking of the dwelling place Conrad was soon to occupy. And it occurred to me that, without too much difficulty, I could probably describe that room. First, there would probably be a Ford car parked outside. And inside a certain amount of clutter because of the numerous stacks of books that he’d surely insist on having around. In addition to the ever-present and well-thumbed Bible, there would probably be a copy of Jane’s Fighting Ships, a dozen or so novels remaining from Patrick O’Brian’s Aubrey-Maturin series about naval adventures during the Napoleonic wars that Conrad had not yet had an opportunity to finish, and goodness knows what else. But books and Doenges go together like lilies and Easter!

Except for Ellen and one or two others, I have probably known Conrad longer than the rest here today. During the 1963-64 academic year he had entered the academic slave market and his search for a faculty position had taken him to Indiana University where I then was, and my liking and admiration of him began with our very first conversation. All of us know that he chose The University of Texas for his academic home, much to the chagrin of my senior professor in Bloomington who wanted very much to add a colleague who was superbly trained in history as well as finance and economics, a perfect description of Conrad.

When I myself came to Austin in 1966, the allure of UT was substantially augmented by Conrad’s presence here. I do recall from those early days watching him zip by in his pink T-bird convertible (he wasn’t the world’s most cautious driver back then!) and he and Ellen together in that car easily conjured up images of Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello on a romp! (Some of you may have to have those names explained…)

As it has to this day, the Doenges and Mettlen family friendship flowered through those early years. There was instruction from the Old Testament Book of Genesis to go forth and multiply — so we did. Each produced three offspring — three Mettlen girls and three exceptional Doenges boys, Curt, John, and Will, whose relative sizes do not reveal the sequence of their births. Well before the concept of genetic engineering was developed, Conrad and I had at least one conversation in which we speculated on the extraordinary improvements in the human gene pool that could be expected if our children could be paired off. Each, respectively, subsequently proved that he and she had independent views on such matters, so Conrad and I merely reverted to attributing their obvious intelligence and independence to their parents.

Among Judi’s and my fond recollections are such shared pleasures as a picnic on our Clear Creek County Colorado mountianside and a sumptuous meal at the Doenges’ mountain cabin near Buffalo Creek. As you know, Conrad is to be interred in Colorado — a beautiful part of the world that he dearly loved. He fully
appreciated the majesty of the purple mountains above the fruited plains! And that heavenly room I spoke of earlier will surely have a big picture window looking out over the Rockies!

Conrad’s own parents were marvelous folks who also became friends of ours during their Austin visits from Colorado. Both his mother and father strictly held sincere views about morality and proper behavior that, while thoroughly commendable, may have been just a bit on the puritanical side. On one occasion, in anticipation of a parental visit, the Mettlen home became the temporary hiding place of Conrad’s bottle of scotch! And Conrad displayed his trust in me (to the best of my knowledge) by not even marking the level of its contents!

Well, if President Roosevelt taught us to say “day of infamy,” one of F.D.R.’s favorite pen pals, one of my 20th Century heroes, Winston Churchill, also serves as a stimulant to my memories of Conrad. When Churchill wrote to F.D.R. during the war, he routinely signed his letter, “Former Naval Person,” as a testament to his earlier role as First Lord of the Admiralty. That designation applies with equal accuracy to Conrad as well. Or should I say to Commander Doenges! Churchill’s numerous writings stamped him, among other things, as a first-class historian. Conrad was magna cum laude in history at Harvard. And Churchill’s voice inspired millions of freedom-loving peoples around the globe. Who among us will ever forget that wonderfully deep, melodious, and mellifluous voice of Conrad’s? Conrad was passionate about many things — his wife, his sons, his church and faith, his profession, his universities. But I cannot recall ever seeing him truly angry or flirting with the boundaries of self-control. When you are well versed in the history of mankind and totally secure in the faith of our fathers — as Conrad was — few circumstances need be met with debilitating alarm or panic. Conrad was cool — in both the contemporary and traditional uses of that term, and that marvelous voice of his never failed to inspire his listeners’ calm and close attention.

Rudolph Conrad Doenges was a great friend, a great colleague, and, as long as I draw breath, I shall miss him dearly.
In January of 1986, a man I had never met became associate dean of the undergraduate program and our new boss. Staff, including myself, were curious as to what type of man he was. Knowing that he was a professor of finance, I called an employee in the finance department, and asked her opinion of Dr. Doenges. She was enthusiastic in her assessment: “He’s a wonderful man. You’ll love working with him.” Her assessment was prophetic. He was a wonderful man, and everyone did indeed enjoy working with him. That sentiment is echoed by the multitude of witnesses who are gathered here today to remember and honor Dr. Doenges.

As undergraduate dean, Dr. Doenges came into a difficult situation at the time of his appointment. We had a large, unwieldy program, lacking in resources and prominence. We were an office with half the number of employees we have today, but with twice the number of students, and no technology except for one small Apple Macintosh computer, which Dr. Doenges closely guarded in his office. There were many problems, crises and difficulties, and above all, lots and lots of students. Into this barely organized chaos walked Dr. Doenges. He provided a steady hand, a cool head, and quiet leadership, which allowed us to progress forward.

By the time he left ten years later, he had transformed an unruly giant into the fifth best undergraduate business program in the country, increased resources and staff, improved student services, raised student quality, and reduced resentment from the other schools across campus. Dr. Doenges didn’t need to take on the undergraduate assignment. After all, he had already provided administrative service to the school as dean of the MBA program and as chair of the finance department. But he was a giver and a team player, and when he was called upon, he saddled up once again. It was typical of the selfless devotion he demonstrated in countless other ways to his friends, his colleagues, the college, the University, his church, his community, and his country.

I call him Dr. Doenges now, but then we always referred to him as Dean Doenges. To those of us who worked for him, we never called him by his first name. Never. It was not so much the difference in age between the staff and him, but out of respect. He was a father figure to most of us, and calling him by his first name was like calling your parents by their first name. He had a marvelous ability to bring people together and get them to work as a team. His strength of character diffused many potential staff problems. His wisdom and guidance kept us on a clear course, and as employees we all learned to work together for the common good. About the worst thing you could do as an employee was to disappoint him by not doing your job, or behaving inappropriately. Not because he would yell at you, or write a reprimand for your file, or discipline you. But you didn’t want to disappoint him because you felt just AWFUL about it. When you had to sit there with him in his office and discuss what went wrong, it was like flunking an exam or letting down a close friend. Dr. Doenges inspired you to do what was right by his example.

Students also had a great respect for Dr. Doenges, although they had a little different viewpoint. Imagine yourself being 18 years old and at a summer orientation session at UT in a room full of 200 other freshmen. There is a lot of noise, talking, and shuffling around when the orientation program starts and your dean is introduced. You glance to the stage and see a slight man, somewhat reminiscent of your grandfather, with glasses covering piercing blue eyes. He goes to the microphone and speaks, and for the first time you hear it — the VOICE; that deep, resonant voice which hushes a room and commands attention. Our students called it the voice of God, and never was it more prominent than at our college commencement. Dr. Doenges read the names of thousands of students each year for ten years and never made a mistake! Well, he did make mistakes, but you never questioned it because the Voice said it in such a way that it must be so. Dr. Doenges’ voice just seemed to fit the measure of the man and was a vocal manifestation of how we all felt about him, generating a sense of awe and respect.

It’s no wonder students were a bit intimidated by him after their orientation encounter. Once, I remember a freshman who had an appointment with him, and as the student checked in at the receptionist desk, I heard him say in a nervous voice “I’m here for my appointment with Dean Dangerous.” The name Doenges received a variety of pronunciations over the years, but it was the only time we ever heard him called Dangerous. But this young man and indeed all of our students had nothing to fear from Dean Doenges. He was a kind and
understanding man. Well, unless you were a student who wanted to get out of the history requirement. Since history was a lifelong love of Dr. Doenges, he was not accommodating to students who didn’t see its value.

We have some very smart, accomplished faculty in the business school and some of them are not shy about letting you know it. However, Dean Doenges didn’t flaunt his accomplishments and he likewise expected us to check our egos at the door. He treated students with the same respect he showed for faculty and staff and did not differentiate when it came down to human dignity and worth. As a dean he was patient, empathetic, a remarkable listener, and extremely fair in dealing with students. His lifelong commitment to students led to the establishment of an award in his name, which is given annually to the graduating senior in the Honors program who demonstrates the qualities of leadership and service that Dr. Doenges embodied.

In dealing with all people Dr. Doenges was sincere, honest beyond description, and patient. He had a defined set of values and morals that clearly guided his actions. Dr. Doenges lived his values and followed his beliefs in all situations, at all times. Here was an examined life worth living. There was something about him, something quiet but strong, unassuming but magnificent, brilliant but humble. This inner composure I discovered came from his faith. He was a deeply spiritual man, and lived his faith step by step, not in loud proclamations, but day by day. He was confident in his beliefs, and the week before he died when the finality of his situation became evident, he told his family that he was not afraid.

I know that Dr. Doenges relished being at the University and loved teaching and interacting with students. After all, he spent 35 years of his life at UT. But there was one priority above his profession. The most important thing in his life was his family, and at the center of his universe were his wife and three sons. Nothing meant more to him in the world, nothing pleased him more, and nothing rivaled his love for his family. Out of all of the accomplishments he achieved, and all of the positions he held, the ones he was most proud of were that of husband and father. What wonderful sons he raised in Curt, John, and Will, and how proud he was of each one of you. I know that we are here today to say goodbye to your dad, but all we need to do to see him again is look at each of you.

My office was next to Dr. Doenges’ office, and I could always tell when he got a phone call from Mrs. Doenges. His usual businesslike “Hello” when he answered the phone, would be quickly followed by a euphoric “Hello, Mrs. D!” and his voice would lift, and his spirit soared and the room seemed to brighten just because he was talking to her. Ellen, the two of you were indeed a match made in heaven.

Dr. Doenges was a giver, an example to follow, a mentor, a man of principles and faith, and a family man. He knew his priorities and he lived up to them. In the New Testament in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, there is the story of a lawyer who asks Jesus what is the greatest commandment of all. Jesus answers him “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” And a second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” We have all known a man in Dr. Doenges who tried to live his life according to these commandments. And because of the quality of his life, we are better people for having known him. Thank you Dr. Doenges for being a part of our lives — we can never forget you.

May God bless the Doenges family and give you strength and comfort in the days ahead.