The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Robert R. Douglass, professor and dean, Graduate School of Library Science, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
ROBERT R. DOUGLASS

Dr. Robert Raymond Douglass, educator and librarian, founding dean of the Graduate School of Library Science, The University of Texas at Austin, died in Austin on October 11, 1988, at the age of 86. Interment was in Russellville, Alabama.

Born in Florence, Alabama, on October 30, 1901, Douglass earned a BA in economics from the University of Alabama in 1921, an MA in educational administration from Colorado State College (later Northern Colorado University) in 1930, a BS in library science from Peabody College in 1935, and a PhD in library science from the University of Chicago in 1957.

He was a high school principal in Kansas, 1921-22; Latin teacher, Atlanta Public Schools, 1922-25; high school librarian and teacher, Weslaco and Mercedes, Texas, 1926-34; librarian and teacher in the junior college division of New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell, 1935-39; assistant professor of library science, North Texas State College (now the University of North Texas), 1939-41; and associate professor and acting director, Peabody Library School, 1941-47. The remainder of his career, 1948-70, was spent as professor and director (later dean) in the Graduate School of Library Science (now Graduate School of Library and Information Science), The University of Texas at Austin.

In February 1948 he came from the University of Chicago, where he was a doctoral candidate, to The University of Texas to plan and establish a graduate library school, which had been urged for many years by library leaders in Texas and the Southwest, individually and through their professional associations. The school was to be the first in the region to offer the master’s degree as the first professional degree for librarians, in line with new accrediting standards being formulated at that time by the American Library Association. Dr. Douglass accepted the first class of 50 students in the fall of 1948. During the initial years of the school, he operated with the slimmest of financial and personnel resources, trying always to make up for those deficiencies by carrying an overload of work himself.

The main concern of the new school under Dr. Douglass’ direction was the master’s program, but study toward certification as a learning resources specialist (school librarian) was also initiated early in its history. In 1967 a program of post-master’s study, leading to a Certificate of Advanced Study, was made available. In 1969, one year after Dr. Douglass had reached the age of 66 and returned to full-time teaching and research, the doctoral program, for which he had planned and laid the groundwork, became a reality. During his tenure, a new program in Latin American library studies—the only one of its kind in the United States—was also instituted. In addition to the academic programs established during his 20-year tenure as head of the school, 1948-68, he firmly established standards of high quality for education of students, began extension courses, introduced an internship program, served as trusted friend and adviser to students, and planned new quarters.
In his position of leadership, he also set to work in the 1950s and 1960s, aided by the school’s faculty, to help improve library development in Texas and the Southwest, which was lagging behind that in many other areas of the country. Under his guidance, theses of students thoroughly documented existing conditions, problems, and needs of libraries in the area. Dr. Douglass and the faculty provided consultative services for library administrators, library boards, and library education agencies. Douglass also wielded influence through the professional organizations of the state, serving as chair of the Texas Council on Library Education, 1948-51; as a member of the Executive Board of the Texas Library Association, 1955-56 and 1961-63; and as president of the association, 1962-63. The Texas Library Association honored him with its "Distinguished Service Award" in 1964. The citation for the award noted that "his characteristics are represented by a word often used and seldom demonstrated: QUALITY."

Dr. Douglass also worked at the regional and national levels toward the betterment of libraries and library education. He was chair of the Library Education Committee of the Southwestern Library Association, 1959-62; a member of the Executive Board of the Association of American Library Schools, 1947-49; and president of the Library Education Division of the American Library Association, 1961-62.

In 1967, a scholarship fund was established at Texas "in honor of the first director of the Graduate School of Library Science, The University of Texas, who, by the excellence of his service as a teacher, scholar, and administrator, brought prestige to the school and its alumni, raised the level of library science in Texas, and extended the boundaries of knowledge of library science."

When he retired as professor emeritus in 1970, he received the following note from Chancellor Harry Ransom: "This is a word of special gratitude for all that you have done for the University. Your example of selflessness has heartened many a scrambled doubtful time. The high standards you set—and kept—are essentials, I believe, in what the University may still become. Both personally and officially, I am thankful to you. UT stands permanently in your debt."

Hundreds of alumni of the Graduate School of Library Science, faculty colleagues, librarians of Texas and the country at large, and users of libraries, who are the principal benefactors of Douglass' work in the area of education for librarianship and information science, are also indebted to him for his contributions and personal devotion to their interests.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors C. Glenn Sparks (chair), Billie Grace Herring, and Ronald E. Wyllys.

Distributed to the Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on April 20, 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/