The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for John W. F. Dulles, professor, American Studies, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
JOHN W. F. DULLES

John W. F. Dulles had an unusual career pattern for an academician. He received his first teaching appointment at The University of Texas at 49 years old, after finishing a successful career in business. The publication of his first book, *Yesterday in Mexico*, actually preceded the faculty appointment by a year. Between 1966 and 1991, he even held two faculty jobs, teaching in the fall at Texas and the spring at the University of Arizona. He spent the rest of his long career at Texas without giving thought to retirement. “Why would I retire? What would I do?”—he asked—“Watch TV? No, this stuff is too fun and exciting.” Though he recently completed his brilliant record of research and publication, Professor Dulles continued to commute between his home in San Antonio and Austin in order to teach. Before his death at the age of 95, he was revising lectures for a fall class titled “Recent Brazil, 1919 to the Present.”

Professor William P. Glade remembers well Professor Dulles’s unusual appointment at the University, which he explains as follows:

He was named, when he came to the campus, a professor of Latin American Studies rather than a professor in one or another of the departments that participated in that sprawling program, hence, he was happily exempted from the intramural squabbles and rivalries that were not uncommonplace in the life of the University during the time he served here. And although subsequent administrations that wanted everyone to conform to administrative views of the campus reality sought to abolish non-departmental appointments, they were never able to corral this outstanding individual, and he remained in what was perhaps the only faculty appointment on campus that was not subordinated to a chairman, a dean, deans, and the whole panoply of organizational encumbrances that are designed, in some universities, at least as much to control as to support.

Professor Glade served as director of the Institute of Latin American Studies during several of the years that Professor Dulles was teaching in the fall at Texas and in the spring at Arizona. Professor Glade recollects:

As an administrator who was often advising students in the Latin American Studies program, I was impressed by the extent to which his dispassionate but meticulous scholarship was prized by students, the better of whom were always, when their interests touched significantly on Brazil, trying to get into his classes. This objective was not always easily realized, nor indeed was it always possible, owing to the popularity of his offerings, but it is fair to say that the students who could not enroll were always disappointed unless they thought they had a good chance of taking subsequent offerings of his courses. This was not always possible, however, as his teaching appointments elsewhere and his on-going field research meant that he was customarily only on campus about half the academic year, at most. Still, feedback from the students consistently revealed that they felt more than well rewarded by a chance to work with Professor Dulles, even if it was not always in the semester of their preference. What they recognized was the value of a mentor who was both painstaking and objective in his research, patient in his teaching, and one who made ample intellectual room for those who sought to work under his guidance.

John Watson Foster Dulles was born the eldest child of the future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Janet Pomeroy Avery in 1913. He earned his B.A. degree at Princeton University and then his M.B.A. from Harvard University two years later. He worked in banking and mining before attaining a B.S. degree in
metallurgical engineering at the University of Arizona. Subsequently, he found jobs in mining companies in Arizona, Mexico, and Brazil. His wife of 68 years, Eleanor (C.C.) Ritter Dulles, who had taught music and Sunday school, passed away just three days before Professor Dulles. They are survived by four children. To everyone he met, he introduced himself unpretentiously as “Jack” Dulles.

During his long tenure, he produced 12 volumes of history, each one of which has been translated and published in Mexico or Brazil. Professor Dulles’s engagement with history first came through his employment with the Compañía Minera de Peñoles of Monterrey, Mexico. He traveled frequently to Mexico City, spending much time waiting in the anterooms of public officials. There he met and interviewed several retired and semi-retired politicians, such as former Presidents Lázaro Cárdenas, Plutarco Elías Calles, and Adolfo de la Huerta. From them, Professor Dulles developed a research methodology of balancing extensive personal interviews with meticulous newspaper research. The first result of this effort yielded Yesterday in Mexico: A Chronicle of the Revolution, 1919-1934 (1961).

In the meantime, he had taken the position of vice president of the Companhia Mineração Novalimense of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He soon became fascinated with Brazilian politics, publishing Vargas of Brazil: A Political Biography some five years after he joined the faculty in Austin. The University of Texas Press published all of his books, save the two volumes he devoted to the political biography of General and President Humberto de Alencar Castello Branco (Texas A & M University Press, 1978 and 1980). He devoted other books to the politics leading up to the Brazilian military revolution of 1964 (Unrest in Brazil, 1970), to communism (Anarchists and Communists, 1973, and Brazilian Communism, 1983), to the São Paulo Law School and the anti-Vargas Resistance (1986), to Carlos Lacerda in two volumes (1991), and to conservative lawyer Heráclito Sobral Pinto’s defense of human rights (2002 and 2007). His chronicle of Sobral Pinto’s opposition to the military government was Professor Dulles’s last book. “When I was in the late stages of gathering material for this biography, physical problems afflicted me and made it clear that this is my farewell to writing for publication.” This quote comes from the introduction to the 2007 volume, in which he also acknowledged his gratitude to family members and friends in Brazil who had helped him on his annual research trips.

Reviewers have praised Professor Dulles for the painstaking and meticulous research in each of his published works. A self-defined “computer illiterate,” he wrote all his manuscripts in long hand with pencil double-spaced on thousands of yellow legal pads. But he remained very much the chronicler he had become in his first book on Mexican political history. As Professor Dulles used to tell visitors to his office, “I’ll leave it up to the readers what all of this means. I just want to tell the important story.” Therefore, his scholarship has become an indispensable asset to researchers and teachers. “In my classes, I still utilize the revealing anecdotes I read in his books or heard as a student in his lectures,” says Jonathan C. Brown, now a professor of history at The University of Texas. “There are the detailed vignettes about General Álvaro Obregón losing his arm in the Battle of Celaya or getting shot to death by a religious fanatic after winning the Mexican presidential election of 1928. I still tell students about how the Brazilian Communist Luiz Carlos Prestes purposely provoked his guards to beat him up just before a court appearance. The particulars of the military coup d’état in 1954 and President Vargas’s suicide always fascinate students.” Professor Dulles’s extensive interviews, the transcripts of which are available in the John W. F. Dulles Papers at the Benson Latin American Collection, reveal his trilingual talents as well as his commitment to accuracy. In addition, these documents capture the depth of his epistolary, especially with Brazilian correspondents.

Over the years, Professor Dulles’s reverence for the history of Brazil won him the devotion of his students. His lectures became known for the telling anecdote, for the depiction of human behavior in high politics, and for the wry humor. “As his student, I recall vividly the occasion in which his famous uncle Allen Dulles, then retired, accompanied his nephew to class one afternoon,” Professor Brown says. “Jack was in the middle of a humorous tale about the particularly inept attempts of Vargas’s followers to silence the newspaperman Carlos Lacerda. They involved a character known as the ‘Black Angel of Catete Palace.’ I glanced around to observe how the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency was enjoying the story. Alas, Uncle Allen was napping.” Many years later, Professor Dulles gave up his cherished tennis matches and had to make his way to class on a motorized scooter—driving quite fast. He even cut back on smoking the pipe. But the keen memory and strong voice did not fail him, and Professor Dulles never disappointed his students.
Never one to press his views on others or to involve extra-mural politics and ideologies in interpersonal relations with others in the academic community, let alone into his seminars, this aberration from what was so frequent in the 1970s and 1980s made him a particularly cherished co-worker in the groves of academe. He never sought to engage in intramural politics, nor did he maneuver to get on key committees and other associations to further either his career or his beliefs. He was unfailingly cordial and pleasant when called on. However, to say that he kept to himself, so far as faculty matters were concerned, is really another way of saying that he dedicated himself to his research and his teaching rather than self-aggrandizement. A certain solitariness in his work at The University of Texas was structural in origin, though no doubt it conformed well to his personal preferences.

Although he did not engage in ideological disputes, his treatment of ideology remains the measure of Professor Dulles’s contribution to the craft of history. He was a keen student of the communist movement in Brazil and recognized the reasons for its few successes and its many failures. Yet he devoted more attention to the creative conservatives in Brazilian society, the true believers of the Catholic Church, and the principled critics of the misuse of executive power. He found no contradiction between his admiration for the first leader of the post-1964 military regime, General Castello Branco (whom he called the “reformer”), and Sobral Pinto, the intrepid conservative censor of the generals who succeeded Castello Branco as president. In his writing, Professor Dulles favored individual freedom over government dictate, whether the latter emanated from the populist Vargas or from the reactionary General Emilio Garrastazu Medici. The idiosyncratic always intrigued Professor Dulles—the automobile attacks of Mexican laboristas against the horseback-mounted sinarquistas in 1934 or Brazilian nationalists shouting “O petroleo e nosso” over a scarcely existent national oil industry in 1954. “Jack Dulles demonstrated to us that paradox and irony truly transcend national boundaries as well as historical periods,” concludes Professor Brown.

The memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Jonathan C. Brown (chair) and William P. Glade.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on June 9, 2009. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.