The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Bob Meredith Fannin, professor emeritus, electrical and computer engineering, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Dean P. Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
BOB MEREDITH FANNIN

Bob Meredith Fannin, Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, died July 5, 2013. Bob and his twin brother, Billy, were born on June 9, 1922 in Midland Texas to Ollie Coffee and Oliver William Fannin. Bob grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, and graduated from Polytechnic High School in 1940. He then enrolled at Texas Agricultural College in Arlington, Texas. Completing the pre-engineering program there in 1942, he then entered The University of Texas where he played on the varsity basketball team. Bob received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from The University of Texas in 1944.

In 1944, Bob joined the U.S. Navy and went through pre-radar school at Bowdoin College and radar school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was an electronics officer for Carrier Air Group 81 and was honorably discharged in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant (junior grade). Following his discharge from the Navy he returned to UT Austin and in 1947 received a Master of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering. His thesis was entitled “Normal Mode Method of Determining the Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves Around the Earth.” On June 2 of that year, he married Martha Ellen Stewart at the Broadway Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth.

For the next two years, he was an instructor in mathematics at Texas Agricultural College in Arlington. In 1948, he was accepted to Cornell University as a Research Associate and part-time student in the Ph.D. program, and he and Martha moved to Ithaca, New York. In 1951, they returned to Austin, and Bob joined the Electrical Engineering Research Laboratory (EERL) at UT Austin as a research engineer. While at EERL he continued to work on his Ph.D. and also taught courses in the electrical engineering department on a part-time basis.

Bob received a Ph.D. in 1956. The title of his dissertation was “Line-of-Sight Wave Propagation in a Randomly Inhomogeneous Medium.” Following graduation, he accepted the position of associate professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He also held the position of research professor at the New Mexico Engineering Experiment Station.

In 1958, Bob returned to the Department of Electrical Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin as an associate professor. He also held the title of radio engineer at EERL. He remained an active member of the electrical engineering department until his retirement in in the late 1980s. During his tenure in the department, he served as graduate advisor and was a member or chair of numerous department and college committees. He taught a wide variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These courses were in such diverse areas as electromagnetic field theory, electromagnetic energy conversion, statistical communications, information theory, and engineering management. Bob was a popular instructor in these courses and always received outstanding student evaluations. Now retired dean of engineering, Ben Streetman, who was one of his students, said “I enjoyed his classes and he set an excellent standard of professionalism and the students picked up on that by knowing him.” In addition to classroom teaching, Bob supervised nine Ph.D. and eleven M.S.
students and served on dissertation committees and as a reader for the M.S. theses of many other students. In 1976 he was promoted to full professor.

Bob was active in research and often worked closely with Professor Archie W. Straiton. He made many significant contributions to the field of radio science. Bob’s research work in millimeter wave propagation through atmospheric irregularities has been widely cited. He authored or co-authored over fifty technical reports and archival publications and presented numerous invited papers and lectures. He also published three books. He was a regular reviewer for the major archival journals in his field. He was a member of Eta Kappa Nu, the Electrical Engineering Honor Society, and was a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers professional society. He was also a member of the U.S. Commission II of the International Scientific Radio Union and served as a delegate to the Twelfth General Assembly. He was a registered professional engineer in the State of Texas.

Bob was always approachable by both his students and his colleagues. He had an unassuming personality but clearly possessed a quiet thoughtful wisdom. He stood tall not only because of his imposing 6 ft. 6 in. physical stature but also because of his steadfast personal integrity. Because of his rapport with the students, in 1977, he was selected to be the student counselor in the Office of the Dean, College of Engineering, a position he held until his retirement.

Bob was a strong family man devoted to his beloved wife Martha, his three daughters Susan, Janet, and Ann, his son, William and his wife Valerie, his granddaughter Addley, and grandson Stewart. He was a charter member of the Covenant Presbyterian Church where he served as an elder. An eagle scout as a youth he volunteered for many years with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America. His many contributions to The University of Texas at Austin, his family, friends, and students will be long remembered.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors J. K. Aggarwal (chair), Francis X. Bostick, and Robert H. Flake.

Distributed to the dean of the Cockrell School of Engineering on December 5, 2013, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.