DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR E. GLYNN HARMON

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for E. Glynn Harmon, professor, information, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Dean P. Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
E. GLYNN HARMON

E. Glynn Harmon was born in California in 1933. He spent his early years on the family ranch until his father entered the Army Air Corps as a flight instructor, relocating the family to a number of communities in the western states. After World War II, his father started an aviation business, providing Glynn with an opportunity to learn to fly at a young age; on his sixteenth birthday, he soloed ten different aircraft, a national record that was unbroken for twenty-eight years. This achievement was an early indicator of Glynn’s interest in living on the edge, crossing interdisciplinary lines of study and investigation.

Glynn took classes at several community colleges and San Jose State University before he began an early career in the Navy. Naval flight training led to a position as a plane commander in a patrol squadron, where his responsibilities included conducting electronic spy missions over China in the late 1950s. The navy recalled him in the early 1960s, and he served as a Russian interpreter during the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. He retained professional certification as a commercial pilot. His career in aviation and his undergraduate employment in a mental hospital were influential experiences in helping him focus a lifelong curiosity about the place of the mind and brain and the role of relevance and cognition in information seeking.

Glynn completed a bachelor’s degree in political science (1960) and a master’s degree in public administration (1963) at the University of California, Berkeley, and a master’s degree in library and information science (1965) and a Ph.D. (1969) at Case Western Reserve University, followed by an MBA at Southwest Texas State University (1973) (now Texas State University). In the 1960s, he taught courses at the University of Denver and the University of Michigan and returned to Denver where he was promoted to associate professor. He followed his mentor, Jesse Shera, to the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (now the School of Information) at The University of Texas at Austin in fall 1970 where he remained on the faculty for the next forty-three years. His initial appointment was as associate professor and he was promoted to professor in 1975. He supported the curriculum by teaching many courses ranging from a required research methods course to courses on administration, expert systems, artificial intelligence, networks, user needs, and communication behavior. Specifically, he is remembered for creating a successful medical informatics curriculum and teaching a popular course in marketing.

Professor Harmon contributed to the administrative duties of the School of Information, serving as graduate advisor, as acting dean (1990), and as interim dean (1997-99). He contributed to the work of numerous committees within the School of Information and is remembered for his distinctive style of inquiry and congenial approach to problem-solving. Students honored him with a Texas Excellence in Teaching Award and a Texas Excellence in Advising Award. His wrote two books, one of which received the Book of the Year Award from the American Society for Information Science in 1983. His over fifty journal articles and other publications are found in a wide range of venues, including Nature, Proceedings of the Society for Information Science, Journal of the American Society for Information Science, and the Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science. He was also known for and proud of his role in reviewing numerous chapters in the 10695
Annual Review of Information Science and Technology. For the last ten years of his life, he served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin. He was a member of a number of professional associations. He founded the Texas Chapter of the American Society for Information Science (now ASIS&T, the Association for Information Science and Technology) and encouraged his students to contribute.

Glynn will be remembered for his loyalty to retaining an academic community from a wide range of disciplinary areas devoted to continuous learning. He was extremely committed to his doctoral students and chaired more than a dozen doctoral committees. In 2004, he was recognized as one of the top twelve UT Austin dissertation advisors.

E. Glynn Harmon died on Sunday, February 17, 2013. He is survived by his loving wife, Kitty. His colleagues and many students will always remember his gentle spirit, cheerful smile, encouragement to continue to learn, approachability, and dedication to the School of Information.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Loriene Roy (chair), Philip Doty, and Barbara Immroth.

Distributed to the dean of the School of Information on November 13, 2013, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.