The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Joseph Jay Jones, professor, English, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
JOSEPH JAY JONES

Joseph Jay Jones, professor of English for 40 years, died on February 12, 1999, at age 91. He was preceded in death by his wife, Johanna, and their son, David, and is survived by two daughters, Judy Holden and Suzie Sarrett, and numerous grandchildren. He was born in Peru, Nebraska, on June 29, 1908, and attended public schools in Tecumseh, Nebraska. After three years at Nebraska State College in Peru (1926-1929), he transferred to the University of Nebraska and graduated in 1930. He then attended Stanford University, where he received his MA in 1931 and his PhD in 1934.

After teaching at Colorado State College in 1934-1935, Joe began his 40 years of service to The University of Texas. His collegiality was evident in his memberships: the American Association of University Professors, the Modern Language Association, the South Central Modern Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Conference of College Teachers of English, and the Texas Association of College Teachers. His initiative and leadership were reflected in the offices he held in professional organizations, such as chapter president of the American Association of University Professors, chapter president of the Texas Association of College Teachers, and president of the Union Club. He also served on the editorial boards of numerous organizations and publications, including American Speech, Australian Literary Studies, Studies in the Novel, the Committee on Manuscripts Holdings, and the Committee on American Literature for the Modern Language Association. His professional service to the University included an enormous number and wide variety of committees, such as the Faculty Council, the Committee on Fulbright Scholarships, the Calendar Committee, the Sophomore English Committee, and the Texas Union Board.

Joe and his beloved wife Johanna were very much at home in Austin but they were also well traveled. Joe served as a visiting professor at East Texas State College in Commerce, Texas, the University of Illinois, and the University of Minnesota. Abroad, he had visiting professorships at Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand, and at Cape Town and Witwatersrand, in South Africa. He also had Fulbright fellowships at the University of Hong Kong and Chinese University, Hong Kong.

In addition to their travels together, Joe and Johanna were partners in researching and writing numerous books and publications. In a period of only three years (1981-1983), Twayne Publishers published three of their books: Canadian Fiction, Australian Fiction, and New Zealand Fiction, despite the fact that Professor Jones "retired" in 1975.

Joe Jones was an original. A specialist in American transcendentalism, he practiced a type of self reliance akin to the values of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. His exploring mind was attracted to the neglected literature written in English outside England and America, and he worked hard and long to advance the study of the literature and culture of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Canada, and other countries in which literature in English was prominent. He continually requested funds for the purchase of books representing the riches of Commonwealth literature, offered courses in the field,
and promoted visiting and exchange professorships that paid special attention to the literature of Australia and Canada.

The range of Joe’s interests may be suggested by the numerous hours he devoted—using a shovel and wearing rubber boots—to cleaning up and caring for his beloved Waller Creek. For ten years he wrote and revised an account of this work, his thinking, and his values in *Life on Waller Creek* (Austin: AAR-Publications, 1982). This became his best-known book, very different from yet comparable to Thoreau’s *Walden*. Joe appeared in Richard Linklater’s first film, *Slacker*, where his screen presence has been described as striking because of, paradoxically but characteristically, his complete naturalness. Other examples of Joe’s versatility, among dozens that could be given, are his extensive work as editor of the Twayne series on world literature, his provocative and often controversial essays on English language teaching and on the art of teaching *per se*, and his determination to see Coleridge’s poem *Kubla Khan* set to music and, some day, to be used as the basis of a musical drama.

Joe’s capacity for originality and initiative were exemplified in his “manuscript” project. Before computers were available to the public, scholars wanting to research the manuscripts and letters of American authors had no convenient way of finding which libraries housed the materials of which authors. Securing partial grants to help finance a resolution to this problem, but doing most of the work himself, he sent two waves of questionnaires to over a hundred major libraries, and then gathered and compiled the information. The result was *American Literary Manuscripts* (University of Texas Press, 1960). When this invaluable aid to research in American literature was published, the question repeated by scholars was, “Why didn’t someone think of this before?”

That question provides a significant insight into Joe Jones. He was practical and imaginative, consistent and wonderfully varied. He was a kind and gentle man, yet outspoken and bold when working for projects and values he believed in. Joe’s legacy to his students is the encouragement to be self reliant and unafraid, to work cheerfully with others but be willing to challenge routine and advocate reform and innovation. Clearly, the best way to learn what Joe Jones taught was to observe closely the man himself.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Max Westbrook (chair), Joseph Malof, and Joseph Moldenhauer.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, 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/](http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/)
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This bibliography was compiled by Professor Joseph J. Moldenhauer, a member of the Joseph Jay Jones memorial resolution committee.