The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Terry Gilbert Jordan-Bychkov, professor, geography, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
TERRY GILBERT JORDAN-BYCHKO

Terry Gilbert Jordan-Bychkov died in his home in Austin on October 16, 2003, after a two-and-a-half year struggle with pancreatic cancer. Few geographers have influenced their fields as much as Jordan-Bychkov. In addition to a series of influential scholarly books and articles, he created and for many years co-authored a widely adopted introductory textbook. His approach to geography was not a common one, but for that reason his name became perhaps even better known as evocative of a distinctive arena of study and a kind of geography. For most of his life he lived and published under the name Terry G. Jordan, and was always known simply as “Terry” to his friends. In 1997, he changed his professional nom de plume to Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov, in recognition of his marriage to Bella Bychkova.

Terry was a sixth generation Texan, with a strong appreciation not just for Texas but also for lands of pioneer and frontier heritage. He was never happier than when he was at one of the remote places of the earth, whether it be New Zealand, Siberia, Finland or New Guinea; remote borders, frontiers, and “land’s ends” were his very favorite places. Terry was a great believer in knowing where people came from and in understanding intellectual precedents and influences. As such, he was an avid student of genealogy. He situated himself as the product of two ethnic and genealogical strains, based on the backgrounds of his father and mother. Terry often attributed his interests in scholarship and Europe to his father while he attributed his interest in the American South and his feistiness to his mother.

Terry’s father Gilbert J. Jordan (also known as Johann Gilbert Jordan) was born in 1902 in the Hill Country Texas village of Plehweville (now Art). From 1930 to 1968, he was professor of German at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, serving as department chair for many years. He wrote several volumes of poetry, a translation of William Tell, a genealogy of the Jordan family (co-written with Terry), articles on medieval German drama, and a translation of a nineteenth century German travel account (finally published in 1999 by Terry). Gilbert was awarded a First Class Service Cross by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1960.

Terry’s mother, Vera “Bebbie” Jordan (Tiller), was born October 10, 1907, on a cotton farm near Elysian Fields, in east Texas. She had family roots in Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. Terry remembered her as a “steel magnolia, a southern matriarch in every sense of the word” who created a hospitable and warm home. He said, she “showed us how to live, fight, and die.” Terry was a member of a vast Texas family clan with numerous branches. However, he always distanced himself from them in his independence of thought and in his distinctly unromantic and (at times) tragic view of Texas life and history. The family gave him a degree of authenticity and legitimacy in speaking on matters Texan, but at the same time they inoculated him against easy generalizations or a simple regional patriotism.

Terry was born on August 9, 1938, in Dallas. He grew up in the northern suburb of University Park, a middle-income neighborhood adjacent to the elite enclave of Highland Park. He attended Highland Park High School where he developed a lifelong antipathy for people of privilege who did not use their abundant resources in morally and ethically productive ways. He also went to Methodist church every Sunday with his mother and father. Although he retained a lifelong love of Methodist hymns and a lifelong interest in religion as a cultural
phenomenon, he had no personal faith in any organized religion, proclaiming himself a “geotheist” near the end of his life. He once told Professor Robert K. Holz that Geography was his religion.

In the early 1940s, his home was not very far from the cotton fields at the edge of the city, and Terry enjoyed riding out to the countryside on his bicycle. He had limited opportunities to travel longer distances while growing up, but maps fascinated him before he learned to read. His father gave him an atlas and by the age of five he was drawing maps. At age seven, Terry pestered his parents to let him go with them and his older sister on their first, post World War II car trip to Colorado in their black 1937 sedan. He stood on the front seat nearly the entire trip, trying to be the first to spot landmarks such as Capulin Mountain and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and he kept until his death the oil-company maps used on that trip. He came eventually to see this as a determinative experience in his choice of career.

After graduating from high school in 1956, he enrolled in Southern Methodist University, largely because his father taught there. He took a geography course his first semester and chose it as one of his two majors (with German) by his sophomore year. As a senior, Terry had already decided to devote his life to higher education in geography. Three geography professors at SMU were instrumental in Terry’s education and career—Edwin J. Foscue, John Bergmann, and Virginia Bradley. These three scholars prepared Terry in very different ways. Foscue (1899-1972) was a charismatic teacher and an accomplished writer, having completed a dissertation at Clark University on the lower Rio Grande Valley. Terry strongly identified with this native Texan of German heritage, admiring the way Foscue could evoke regional images in his lectures and write about regions in engaging ways. These were skills Terry tried to emulate, and this is perhaps no more evident than in a comparison of Terry’s The European Culture Area with Foscue’s Regional Geography of Anglo-America, a textbook that Terry greatly admired.

With a Texas M.A. and a UCLA Ph.D., John Bergmann introduced Terry to traditional cultural-historical geography, the German language tradition in geography, and the works of Carl Sauer. Terry’s first assignment under Bergmann was to read an article in Erdkunde on the cloud forests of Costa Rica. Terry often commented that being forced to read geographical articles in German was one of his best educational experiences, and he fondly remembered Bergmann as a “genuinely nice man.” Virginia Bradley was the first woman to earn a doctoral degree from the University of Chicago, with a dissertation on the Guadalupe River. She was asked to teach regional courses on areas on which she had little training, but she always came to class prepared and was dedicated to students and teaching. Terry acknowledged that his skills in the classroom were a tribute to her. He also learned a lot from two SMU classmates who were to go on to careers in geography in higher education, Tom McKnight and Otis Templer.

Terry also pursued a second major in German and took some French courses. He was active in drama, where he met his first wife, Marlis Anderson. He won an award for excellence in German and was reasonably fluent in that language for the rest of his life. He spoke some Spanish (his high school language) and was able to pick up conversational terms in numerous other languages.

Terry was also a member and secretary of Beta Theta Phi fraternity and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. To support his studies, he worked as an assistant in the university mailing department and as a lab instructor in climatology. He was interested enough in economics to take three courses in the subject. His “parlor socialism” and populism blossomed at SMU, and he got in trouble for inviting American Communist John Gates to lecture to a student group. He supported the civil rights movement.

While on the subject of Terry’s politics, it is worth noting that his leftist leanings almost never extended beyond voting for liberal (not good old boy or “yellow dog”) Democrats such as Ann Richards. Terry felt that universities, especially the sciences and professional schools, had largely sold out to the government and big business. However, he adamantly resisted attempts to use the academy or the Association of American Geographers (AAG) as a platform for political statements. Although he wrestled with the issue and was never completely satisfied with his position, he believed that the learned society, the academy, and the professions required total freedom to seek the truth and profess without censure. He felt that no matter how well intentioned, efforts to mix the learned professions with politics would lead to the destruction of what remained of that precious, sheltered environment. He had, however, no problem with academics leading two lives, one academic and one political, or for their making their findings available to politicians. On the day of the
American-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, he participated in a peaceful sit-in on an intersection near The University of Texas campus, perhaps the first as well as the last act of political direct action in his life.

Terry excelled in his undergraduate studies, graduated after three and a half years in January 1960, and received a $7,000 Southern Teaching Career Fellowship from the Council of Southern Universities for three years of graduate study for the Ph.D., in preparation for a career in college teaching in the South. He also was a recipient of the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, but he rejected this to accept the more advantageous Southern Fellowship. Terry was advised to target Wisconsin, then widely considered the top graduate department, but his advisors suggested he study and get his master’s at The University of Texas to prepare him for the expectations of a premier program.

In April 1960, Terry participated in the first AAG meeting in Dallas, as an aide to the local arrangements committee led by Foscue and other SMU and North Texas faculty. This meeting was noteworthy for a plenary session featuring Walter Prescott Webb, with commentaries by Lorrin G. Kennamer, Donald W. Meinig, and Carl O. Sauer. At this session, Webb credited Texas geographer Lindley Keasbey for providing the basic plan of his book, The Great Plains.

Terry began his master’s studies at Texas in fall 1960 at the age of 22, and he speedily completed his master’s program in August 1961. This was a dynamic period at Texas. The first doctorate in the department’s history had just been granted to Pablo Guzman-Rivas in June 1960; this was also the first doctorate in geography ever awarded in the Southwest outside Louisiana. Two other doctoral students were nearing completion. In 1961 the Professional Geographer included Texas in its listing of the seventeen major Ph.D. granting departments in the country. Terry found the department highly stimulating and supportive of his work.

George W. Hoffman, an Austrian by birth and political geographer by training, directed Terry’s master’s thesis, The German Element of Gillespie County, Texas. However, Donald D. Brand, a Peruvian born, Berkeley trained scholar, was also very influential in shaping his work, by emphasizing rigorous archival and field research. Brand introduced Jordan to August Meitzen’s four-volume analysis of the cultural landscape of central Europe. Meitzen proclaimed that the embodiment of a people’s soul could be discovered by studying houses, barns, fences, village layouts, and the like. Meitzen eventually became one of Jordan’s favorite authors, even though many of Meitzen’s conclusions were wrong, and Terry adopted Meitzen’s method for such works as the American Backwoods Frontier. Terry took a class with Walter Prescott Webb in the fall of 1960, and also took courses from Lorrin Kennamer and Robert Taylor. Dan Stanislawski was on leave during the 1960-61 period when Terry was at Texas, but Terry always expressed high admiration for Stanislawski’s work, especially on Portugal, and counted him as an influence.

Terry took a year off after graduating from Texas before beginning his dissertation work at Wisconsin. In August 1962, he married Marlis Anderson, who was an indefatigable typist, fact-checker, and proofreader for him as well as the mother of his three children. At this time, Terry wrote his first journal articles on German colonization in southern Brazil and windmills in Texas. The former took advantage of his skills in reading and interpreting historical German sources on pioneering; the latter marked the beginning of his long publication record on material folk culture in the landscape even though it would be several years before this became a major focus.

Terry began his dissertation work at Wisconsin in 1962, under the direction of Andrew Hill Clark. Early in his period at Wisconsin, Terry published “Between the Forest and the Prairie,” a study of the land preferences of different ethnic groups in the Midwest. He argued against any simple correlation between ethnic group and settlement strategy and pointed instead to the economic factors that tended to be recognized by all groups alike. His dissertation (later published as German Seed in Texas Soil) relied in large part on archival materials to make an economic argument against the prevailing wisdom that German farmers were more efficient and successful in Texas than local farmers.

Terry defended his dissertation on May 27, 1965, in Madison, three years after entry into the doctoral program at the young age of 26, with the assurance of a job at Arizona State. German Seed in Texas Soil and his early articles stressed the explanatory power of local environmental and spatial conditions to explain the similarity of agricultural choices and practices across different settlement groups; however, by 1967 Terry made a decisive
turn towards diffusionist explanations, an approach that he preferred until the end of his life. For example, his library research on the lower southerners led him to conclude that they helped introduce free range cattle ranching to Texas in contradiction to Webb’s assertion that this ranching complex originated in south Texas. His interest in this subject was due in part to his genealogy: his paternal great-grandfather ran a herd of four hundred longhorns on the open range of Mason County in the 1870s, and some of his maternal ancestors followed the trail to Texas, driving their small herds westward in a series of migrations from the Carolina back country through Georgia and Alabama to East Texas in the early 1800s. Over the years, Terry continued to work on this project, resulting in the publication of Trails to Texas: Southern Roots of Western Cattle Ranching, a book he wanted to title “Carolina’s Children.” Later research and work with colleagues at the University of Texas familiar with Spain and Mexico resulted in his North American Cattle Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion and Differentiation, where he argued for three major sources for the North American cattle raising complex: an Anglo-Texan system (itself a product of influences from the Caribbean, Carolinas, and Mexico), a Midwestern system, and a California system. The latter book won him recognition from the Pioneer America Society and the “Wrangler” award for best nonfiction book of the year from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City (1993).

Terry’s work on ranching included library and field research. Much of Terry’s other work on group diffusion relied on the mapping of population and agricultural census records. This led him to a series of publications on the patterns of historical settlement in Texas by various groups.

In January 1969, Dean Frank Gifford offered Terry the chairmanship of the Department of Geography at the University of North Texas with full professor status, telling him that they were seeking a vigorous young scholar who would continue to publish and would lead a transition from a teacher’s college to a regional state university. Terry accepted this offer and remained at the department as chair until 1982. His appointment was newsworthy: the Dallas Morning News ran a feature article on his hire by Walter Moore, editor of the Texas Almanac.

Terry’s move to Denton placed him in a perfect setting for the observational fieldwork that he preferred over any other research method. He drove the back roads of Texas with detailed maps, looking for and mapping indications of ethnic and folk cultures. He examined the names on mailboxes and in cemeteries and looked for such structures characteristic of ethnic groups as German dance halls. He also entertained an aesthetic interest in pioneer folk culture, including houses, barns, fences, and other visible features. He often recruited family members to help out; his children remember being paid if they spotted a certain kind of structure or other interesting feature. Trip records were kept in detailed journals; the journals contained maps marked with itineraries and important finds, interspersed with written notations, postcards, and other materials pasted in. Together these journals became the basis for many of his publications.

In 1970, the Annals of the Association of American Geographers published Terry’s “Population Origin Groups in Rural Texas” as a map supplement. This map drew on data from local ministers, as well as observations of mailboxes, cemeteries, and other landscape features. The map did not attempt to provide quantitative data of populations and reflected limited census or archival work; as a result, the patterns and boundaries reflect Terry’s own qualitative appraisals. However, it quickly became the standard map on the subject.

Over time, Terry became more interested in log structures (he never called them cabins) as a cultural indicator. He began maintaining a register of log structures at Denton, and he avidly sought examples throughout Texas and elsewhere, carefully noting building and notching styles. He published a series of articles on Texas log structures and a book, Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture. This book won him the Tullis Prize of the Texas State Historical Association as the best book published on Texas history in 1978. He also won awards from the Texas Heritage Council, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and the American Association of State and Local History, and he was named one of sixty Fellows of the Texas State Historical Association in 1980.

In addition to log buildings, Terry also published studies of other house types, chapels, barns, and especially cemeteries. His Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy argued for indigenous and especially African influence on rural Texas graveyard design. However, the book and its photographs provide a moving depiction of cultural
attitudes towards death. The section on children’s graves is especially touching and doubtless reflects Terry’s emotions as a parent.

Thanks to his many publications, Terry was named one of the ten most productive research geographers in the United States for the period 1945-1977 (Annals of the Association of American Geographers 68 (1978): 594). In 1973, he published the first edition of The European Culture Area: A Systematic Geography. This book provided an overview of the physical and human geography of the region, with extended sections devoted to racial, linguistic, and religious patterns. It went through four editions and was translated into Japanese and Italian.

Even more successful was Terry’s second textbook, The Human Mosaic: A Thematic Introduction to Human Geography. The book was organized around five themes that served as a framework for the analysis of a variety of topics including religion, language, ethnicity, and politics. The themes were culture region, cultural diffusion, cultural ecology, cultural integration (changed to cultural interaction in the ninth edition), and cultural landscape. Terry intended the book to reflect the classic Berkeley approach to cultural geography, but he also wanted the book to reflect the plural nature of the discipline. He drew his case examples from a wide range of practitioners. He worked with a collaborator on some of the urban and economic topics. For the first six editions, that was Lester B. Rowntree; the seventh edition added Mona Domosh, and she later became the sole co-author. The textbook was widely adopted in the United States and elsewhere, with Japanese and Korean translations.

Terry’s third major textbook project was Texas: A Geography (with John L. Bean, Jr. and William M. Holmes). Published in 1984, this is a delightful and influential book, but it unfortunately has been long out of print. Twenty years on, it still has no peer for geography courses on Texas.

In addition to writing books, articles, and textbooks, Terry chaired the geography department at North Texas for thirteen years. In 1982, Terry received the Honors Award of the Association of American Geographers, which was presented April 27, 1982, at the AAG meetings in San Antonio. About this same time, he was recruited by The University of Texas at Austin to fill its Walter Prescott Webb Chair of History and Ideas. The position at Austin came with research funding, and this enabled Terry to more freely pursue international research in such places as China, Tibet, Russia and Siberia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Alaska, Tahiti, Scandinavia, Spain, and Korea. He participated in many departmental trips to Mexico and continued to travel across Texas and the United States. He maintained the practice of marking his routes on highway maps and maintaining detailed journals. Also, he began to direct graduate students in Austin, often funding their theses and dissertations with funds from his endowed Chair. He enjoyed traveling with students and working with them.

After 1982, Terry’s research and publications increasingly looked beyond Texas to other parts of North America and the world. One of his most important trips was to Scandinavia in 1985. He had long been interested in the origin and diffusion of log structures. One day he noticed a complex of log buildings on the Sweden/Norway border that represented carpentry techniques common in the United States but rarely seen in Europe. This observation led to a series of publications including The American Backwoods Frontier: An Ethnic and Ecological Interpretation. The book can be considered alongside those of Frederick Jackson Turner and Walter Prescott Webb as presenting a strikingly original interpretation of the frontier in American history. Richly illustrated with diverse photographs and maps, it could not have been produced by any other scholar. The book and many of the related articles were co-authored with Matti Kaups. The book received awards from the Agricultural History Society and the Pioneer America Society.

Terry continued to work on the topic of backwoods culture, publishing The Upland South: The Making of an American Folk Region and Landscape. In some ways a summary of his life’s work on the topic, this book is an examination of selected elements of southern folk culture; it was reviewed (to Terry’s great satisfaction) in the Atlantic Monthly, a final testimony to Terry’s broad appeal.

Around the time Terry was finalizing his work on The American Backwoods Frontier, he was working with Jon T. Kilpinen, who earned his master’s (in 1990) and doctorate (in 1994) on topics related to Rocky Mountain folk culture as an extension of the American backwoods frontier. Terry’s first doctoral student, Kilpinen

Terry’s student, Alyson L. Greiner, worked with him on Australia; Terry’s passion for this country was awakened by a 1988 trip there. Together they worked on issues of migration and the roots of Australian identity. Greiner’s 1996 dissertation and the resulting 2002 book, *Anglo-Celtic Australia: Colonial Immigration and Cultural Regionalism* (co-authored with Terry), argue that there is a cultural cleavage between three Australias, based on the origins of their respective immigrants. Rural lowlanders from England and Scotland settled the rural coastal lowlands. Anglo-Celtic highlanders settled the rural highlands behind the coast. Finally, the cities were settled by urban dwellers from England and Scotland. Although these differences have some explanatory value, Greiner and Terry also indicate that the situation is very complex, and there is no simple regionalism in Australia.


An important collaborator in his later years was Bella Bychkova. A native of Yakutia in Siberia, she and Terry married in 1997. Together they traveled extensively through Siberia, authored *Siberian Village: Land and Life in the Sakha Republic*, and collaborated closely on many other projects and field trips.

During the last twenty-one years of his life at Austin, Terry enjoyed his office in Room 306 of the Geography Building, with its windows looking south over the campus and its mottos on the walls, such as “ye shall know the truth and the truth shall scare the hell out of ye,” and “everything cometh to him who waiteth, so long as he who waiteth worketh like hell while he waiteth.” He taught up until the final weeks before his death. Undergraduates were treated to his ironic, sardonic wit in courses on Texas, Europe, and North America. When he lost his hair in chemotherapy, he asked students to donate baseball caps for him to wear in class.

Terry was hospitable and enjoyed attending and hosting parties and events, including a welcoming party for new students at his home in August 2003, two months prior to his death. Many benefited from his (often anonymous) generosity in supporting the mission of the department. In general, Terry resisted administrative obligations in the last two decades of his life and was appreciative and supportive of the department chairs during this period. He did, however, accept the responsibility of the Presidency of the AAG, and during the 1987-88 term of his service, he played the role of an Old Testament prophet, admonishing geographers to focus on research and publication and forego the temptations of pedagogy and technology. His bully pulpit was the President’s column in the AAG Newsletter, and he generated a blizzard of mail in response, both outraged and supportive. Whether one agreed with him or not or whether one liked him or not, one has to appreciate his dedication and sense of responsibility to the discipline of geography. To his credit, Terry personally answered every letter he received.

However, Terry’s personality is not adequately captured by his provocative presidential columns or even by his books and articles. Those of us who knew him best remember him in the field – in Korea, Mexico, or Texas – making notes in his journals, discussing entomology, eyes alight with the excitement of a new folk building to study, drinking a beer, telling a story or a joke, and expressing his appreciation for the strategies for survival and making a satisfying life by common folk. Ultimately, Terry was a friend of the humble pioneers, anywhere and everywhere in the world, and he was dedicated to the task of making sure that their handiwork would be recognized and honored. Over time, he came to recognize that there was room in geography for everyone and no longer felt alarmed or threatened by new approaches in technology or applied geography.

Shortly after his diagnosis of terminal pancreatic cancer, the Department of Geography and the Environment at Texas honored him with a special reception, dedicating a newly renovated classroom in his honor. Family,
faculty, and students gathered to give speeches and honor him at this occasion. After his death, he was further
honored at a memorial ceremony in the Main Building of The University of Texas, attended by members of the
administration, faculty, staff, students, and family, including Bella and Marlis and his children Eric, Tina, and
Sonya. The bell of The University of Texas Tower was rung in his honor at the UT Remembers ceremony.
According to his wishes he was cremated, and his ashes scattered in various places dear to him.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Gregory W. Knapp
(chair), William E. Doolittle, and Robert K. Holz.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the executive vice president and provost, and the
president on December 22, 2004. 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/.