The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Elton Lacey, professor, mathematics, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Dean P. Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
ELTON LACEY

Elton Lacey was a son of Texas and the hill country in both the genealogical and the mathematical sense. From his early years in Leaky, Texas, through college at Texas A&M and Abilene Christian University (ACU), where he stayed for a Masters degree, the pattern was set. Following his Ph.D. (1963) at nearby New Mexico State, he was a senior post-doctoral fellow at the NASA Manned Spaceflight Center in Houston. Then followed forty productive years of academic life at ACU, the University of Texas at Austin, and Texas A&M as a highly successful teacher, mathematician, and administrator. Two significant ventures into the world at large should be noted: a 1957 summer job with the Army Corps of Engineers on the Mississippi River where he met and married Bonnie Brown, and a Fulbright Fellowship (1972-73) at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw when his research program was receiving international attention.

Sixteen of those forty academic years were spent as a faculty member at the University of Texas. From his start as an assistant professor in the mathematics department in 1964, Elton rose to the rank of full professor and associate chairman before leaving to become head of the Department of Mathematics at Texas A&M. His development as a leader on our campus coincided with a period of dramatic growth in which the Department emerged as a national leader in mathematical research.

Elton’s teaching was divided between undergraduate courses, ranging from pre-calculus through advanced conference courses, and graduate courses spanning from prelim courses in real and abstract analysis to research seminars. He served as the supervisor for the research of twenty-three masters and eleven doctoral students during his sixteen years on our campus. That his teaching talents were widely respected is evident from his selection as the program chairman for the National Conference on Teaching Mathematics.

The general subject of Elton’s research was functional analysis, more specifically, the structure and properties of Banach spaces, infinite dimensional objects that are central in the study of real and complex valued functions. His extensive list of publications includes articles in the Journal of Functional Analysis, Advances in Mathematics, Mathematische Annalen, and the Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society. Perhaps his most prominent publication was the monograph The Isometric Theory of Classical Banach Spaces, volume 208 in the highly regarded Springer-Verlag Grundlehren Series (1974). It should be pointed out that much of his work was done jointly, with a diverse cast of co-authors, clear evidence that he was a valuable research colleague. Notable in this regard was his sequence of papers, beginning in 1974, with Simon Bernau on the classification of Banach spaces. The recognition Elton received for his work led to invitations to speak at meetings and on campuses across the U.S.A., as well as in Europe at Oberwolfach, Gdansk, Berlin, Bonn, Tubingen, and Warsaw.

The various responsibilities Elton assumed in the department and on campus, leading to his appointment as associate chair, are only part of his service to the University and the wider mathematical community. He wrote reviews of current research papers in both Mathematical Reviews and Zentralblatt für Mathematik, he refereed...
papers for a number of important research journals, and he evaluated research proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation. After his move in 1980 from UT Austin to become head of the mathematics department at Texas A&M, he put his leadership talents to work for eleven years plus one year as associate dean of the college, building a strong teaching and research program. His combined service at two major institutions affected the lives of many students and colleagues.

With the passing years, Elton grew interested in genealogy, and he developed on-line tools to help him trace his family’s Texas roots. He and Bonnie could take pride, as well, in the contributions they were making to both the mathematical community and the family tree through their five children: Christopher, James, Scott, Pam, and Michael, an outstanding graduate of our department who is now a highly successful mathematics professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors James W. Vick (chair), John E. Gilbert, and Gary C. Hamrick.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences on January 6, 2014, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.