The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Leon Owen (Tom) Morgan, professor emeritus, chemistry and biochemistry, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary  
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM  
LEON OWEN (TOM) MORGAN

Dr. Leon Owen (Tom) Morgan, professor emeritus of chemistry and biochemistry, died July 29, 2002, at the age of 82. He was born in Oklahoma City on October 25, 1919. In 1941, he graduated summa cum laude from Oklahoma City University. He then entered The University of Texas at Austin and completed a master’s degree in chemistry in 1942. In December of that year he married Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Boyd of Terrell, Texas.

The World War II Manhattan Project brought Dr. Morgan to Chicago as a member of the Metallurgical Laboratory (the famous MetLab) research group where he worked under the direction of Nobel Laureate Glenn Seaborg on the process chemistry of plutonium. During this time, he became a co-discoverer of element 95, americium, and so joined the ranks of the very few scientists who, in the course of human history, participated in the discovery of a new element. After World War II, he completed his doctoral degree with Glenn Seaborg at the University of California at Berkeley.

Dr. Morgan joined the chemistry faculty of The University of Texas at Austin in 1947 and retired as professor emeritus in 1993. In all respects, he was the complete faculty member who achieved distinction in teaching, research, and university service. He was director of the freshman chemistry program for many years and taught numerous upper level and graduate courses. He also supervised the research activities of a significant number of graduate and postdoctoral students, many of whom went on to distinguished scientific careers in industry and academic institutions. He considered teaching some 40,000 students during his 45 years of active service as his most important achievement.

The discovery of americium early in Dr. Morgan’s research career led to a number of important uses of this element in the industrial world. One use that is found in many houses and other buildings is the smoke detector, an often overlooked item that has saved many lives and prevented the destructive damage caused by fire. Dr. Morgan’s later research interest involved the use of nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy to study the structures and behavior of molecules in strong magnetic fields. This research helped to establish the foundation for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) which has become one of the most important diagnostic tools in medicine and is, in many respects, superior to the use of X-rays as a means of looking into the human body to see what ails it.

During his career at The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Morgan served on and provided leadership to numerous faculty and university committees. He also served as chairman of the Graduate Assembly (Graduate School) from 1978-80, and as graduate advisor in chemistry from 1975-78. He was well-known for his keen interest in athletics and recreational sports for both men and women. He served as a member of the University Intercollegiate Athletics Council for Men from 1968-72 and was chairman of that council from 1979-87. Following his retirement from faculty service, Dr. Morgan served as president of the UT Austin Retired Faculty and Staff Association and as chairman of the Advisory Committee to the UT Austin Faculty Center.
In addition to his career at UT Austin, Dr. Morgan had a long consulting association with colleagues at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico. It was there that he developed a love of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the hiking trails of other regions of New Mexico and Colorado.

Dr. Morgan’s life was filled with love of his family, love of the science of chemistry, and devotion to the University. He is survived by his wife, Betty, their four children and six grandchildren, and extended family. He was greatly admired by all who knew him and was surely one of the finest faculty members in the history of the University.

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Alan H. Cowley (chair), Gerhard J. Fonken, and Norman Hackerman.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on March 5, 2003. 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/.