DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
GEORGE SCHULZ-BEHREND

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for George Schulz-Behrend, professor emeritus, Germanic studies, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
GEORGE SCHULZ-BEHREND

George Schulz-Behrend died in Austin, Texas, on August 21, 2010, at the age of ninety-seven. He was born on February 12, 1913, in Greifswald, Germany, the son of Ernst and Ella Schulz, née Behrend. While a student in the Gymnasium in Greifswald, George, among other things, wrote on local interest topics for the Greifswald newspaper. At age fifteen, he immigrated to the United States with his parents and his brother. He attended Boys High School in Brooklyn, recalling much later that he had to work especially hard to improve his English (the humanistic secondary school he had attended in Germany stressed Latin and Greek, and he would have had little instruction in English there). George also worked as an office boy at an import-export firm and would drill himself in English vocabulary while waiting for the bus to go to and from both destinations. He translated words and phrases from German to English and vice versa, a method of language learning he continued to recommend throughout his life. It was one that stood him in good stead, since he became not only an accomplished translator, but also the authority for his friends, students, and colleagues on correct German and English word choice and usage. While working as an office boy, he befriended an Armenian immigrant, and her accounts of the fate of her countrymen fascinated him until his death. One of his first articles dealt with the sources for Franz Werfel’s historical novel, *Die vierzig Tage der Musa Dagh*.

Upon graduating from high school, George Schulz-Behrend set out by motorcycle to explore America and enrolled at the University of Colorado, where he earned a B.A. in English in 1935 and an M.A. in German in 1936. In an autobiographical note written in 1998, he said, “The intent of devoting my life to the profession of scholarship and teaching inspired me first about the time I entered graduate school.” Subsequently, he attended the State University of Iowa, receiving a Ph.D. in German in 1944. In Iowa, he married Mary Louise Barker, and they had two children, Anita and Paul Hubert. He taught English and German as a graduate student, and also taught Latin in a high school. While in Iowa, he became interested in the German immigrants of the Amana settlement, on whose cultural heritage he published several articles.

He continued his interest in German Americana when he came to the University of Texas as an instructor in 1946. While he retired in 1979, he continued to teach on a part-time basis until he became professor emeritus in 1994. One of the last classes he taught was an undergraduate course on the German Texans, for which he was able to use his own translations of Civil War letters and diaries by early German settlers. He was a charter member and benefactor of the German-Texan Heritage Society. Together with Professor Wolfgang F. Michael, who arrived around the same time, he threw himself into teaching and developing extra-curricular activities for his students. For decades, he assisted Professor Michael in the production of annual German plays by dealing with production matters. He also was active in the weekly conversation gathering, *Deutschübende Gesellschaft*, and the German club, the *Eulenspiegelverein*, where he would accompany sing-alongs on his guitar. One of the most memorable meetings of this club, in the mid-1970s, featured a skit he directed and played the lead in, *Rotkäppchen* (Little Red Riding Hood).

In the immediate post-war years, he developed and taught a popular *Samstagsschule* (Saturday school) for children whose parents (especially those of ex-soldiers formerly stationed in Germany) wanted them to learn German. For a number of years, his primary passion was undergraduate teaching, and he was equally skilled in inspiring beginning students (the lead author of this memorial was his student in two introductory courses,
among others) and guiding more advanced German majors. He co-authored a beginning German textbook, *Active German*, and co-edited an anthology for intermediate students, *Worte und Wörter*.

As the department began to develop a graduate degree program in the early 1950s, he was advised to pick a field of scholarly specialization. When he opined that his main interest was modern German literature, he was told (in his words): “We all do that. How about the literature of the German Baroque era?” He accepted the suggestion, which led to many decades of exemplary research, the teaching of graduate seminars both at the University of Texas and at the universities of Berlin and Marburg (as guest professor), and the direction of numerous dissertations and theses. To conduct preliminary research for a scholarly edition of the works of Martin Opitz, perhaps the most important German writer of the period, he taught at a high school in Vienna as a Fulbright scholar in 1952/53. His wife Mary was so taken with life in Austria, where she was able to pursue a career as a singer, that the couple agreed to divorce, and Schulz-Behrend returned to Austin as a single parent. In 1959, he married Betty Stahl Stern and acquired a stepdaughter, Janet. Betty and George spent the next thirty years in cheerful domesticity in their lovely home on Gaston Avenue, the site of much gracious hospitality, where Schulz-Behrend could alternate between tending to his beautiful garden and communing with his magnificent collection of books in a specially constructed library wing. Betty passed away in 2001.

Books were, after teaching and scholarship, his abiding passion. He was instrumental in developing the German holdings of UT Austin’s main library, which was not capable at the time of his arrival of supporting a graduate program. He became a faculty fellow of the library and later was a member of the building committee for the Perry-Castañeda Library. The four volumes of the works of Opitz he edited between 1968 and 1990 are definitive and form the basis for Professor Schulz-Behrend’s scholarly reputation in North America and Europe. Unfortunately, he was unable, due to drastically failing eyesight, to complete the fifth and final volume, although he had almost finished it. In addition, he published a sprightly translation of Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, of which he was justly proud (1965, revised edition 1993). His edition of a *Festschrift* for Helmut Rehder (1979) followed a volume of collected essays based on a symposium he had organized: *The German Baroque: Literature, Music, Art* (1972).

In 1990, a *Festschrift* in his honor appeared: *Opitz und seine Welt*. An account of the honors bestowed upon him can conclude with another quotation from Schulz-Behrend’s autobiographical note of 1998: “The West German government granted me a Gratitude Award and bestowed the Order of Merit on me, but the accolade that pleased me most was that Poland’s grand lady of Baroque studies crowned me a poet laureate in Wolfenbüttel after I had dashed off at a moment’s notice a poem in Alexandrines.”

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Hubert Heinen (emeritus, chair), David Price, and Peter Hess.

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