DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
DONALD L. WEISMAN

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Donald L. Weismann, professor emeritus, art and art history, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

IN MEMORIAM
DONALD L. WEISMAN

Donald LeRoy Weismann (October 12, 1914, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin – March 19, 2007, in Austin, Texas) taught at The University of Texas at Austin from 1954 until 1981 in the Departments of Art, American Studies, and Comparative Studies. Orphaned at age seven, he, his sister, and three brothers were raised at the Milwaukee County Home for Dependent Children. Dr. Weismann earned his B.S. in art (1935) and M.A. in history and criticism of art (1940) from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He was awarded a two-year scholarship in the History of Art to the University of Bonn, but this was cancelled due to the start of World War II. During the war, he served as a lieutenant in the navy in the South Pacific. Dr. Weismann received his Ph.D. in art history and criticism from Ohio State University in 1950 with a dissertation entitled Language and Visual Form as Complementary Media for Communication and Expression. He taught at Illinois State Normal University, North Texas State College, and Wayne University before joining the faculty of the University of Kentucky as professor and head of the Department of Art in 1951. Three years later he was hired by The University of Texas at Austin as professor and chair of the Department of Art. In 1967 Dr. Weismann was named University professor in the arts, a position he held until his retirement in 1981, and chair of the Department of Comparative Studies. For many years he served as an adjunct professor for the Union Graduate School, Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, Colorado. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Dr. Weismann to be a member of the National Council on the Arts, Washington, D.C., from 1966 to 1972.

Dr. Weismann enjoyed a rich and quite diverse career as a scholar, creative writer, and visual artist. A talented painter, his art was exhibited widely across Texas and beyond. He described his work as being concerned with the interrelationships of language, music, visual form, and motion. Foremost among his academic texts are Language and Visual Form: The Personal Record of a Dual Creative Process (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968) and The Visual Arts as Human Experience (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970). In both books he sought to explain the creative process or the psychology of art by which painters and writers see and respond to the world around them. Why Draw? Conversations with Donald L. Weismann conducted by Joseph F. Wheeler (San Francisco, 1974) was published as part of the National Humanities Faculty why Series. Dr. Weismann provided an introduction to Frank Reaugh, Painter to the Longhorns (College Station, 1985).

Dr. Weismann was an accomplished poet and creative author. Among his long poems are Jelly was the Word (Austin, 1965) and Duncan Phyfe and Drum with Notes for the Bugle Corps (Bryn Maur, PA, 1984). In 1977, he published The Twelve Cadavers of Joe Mariner, a story about a young artist in New York whose first show displayed two nude cadavers. Dr. Weismann co-wrote a screenplay version with the actor Lee Marvin. Follow the Bus with the Greek License Plates appeared in 1981. In 1997, Dr. Weismann completed In Four Houses and Out: A Sentimental Return to the Twenties in Milwaukee, a memoir about his childhood. The Stuff of Stories: Clues to a Lot of Unwritten Books (1999) contained 116 essays based on tape recordings by Dr. Weismann. Artifacts, Fictions, and Memory: An Insidious Bouquet of Essays (2001), An American Fugue (2002), and Memory with Imagination: A Grip on the Real World (2007) are among his last publications.
As a teacher, Dr. Weismann was both innovative and popular. In 1961 he completed forty one-hour videotapes for the freshman course *Introduction to the Visual Arts* for use at The University of Texas plus ten other Texas universities and colleges on the “new Microwave network”. This was funded by the Ford Foundation, Federal Government (National Defense Education Act), and The University of Texas. He prepared another series of nine videotapes entitled “Mirror of Western Art” shown on National Educational Television.

Dr. William Goetzman (American studies) described Dr. Weismann as “the funniest man that the University of Texas was ever privileged to have as a professor. He was also one of the wisest, most versatile people, painter, and writer of many books, teacher and friend.” His wit and humor were prized by his colleagues and students.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Jeffrey Chipps Smith (chair), Glenn Peers, and Richard Shiff.

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