REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR GLENN A. WELSCH

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Glenn A. Welsch, professor emeritus, accounting, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM
GLENN A. WELSCH

Glenn Welsch loved The University of Texas, where he earned his Ph.D. and spent thirty-two years teaching all levels of accounting classes. He built his home on fill excavated from a building site on the UT campus and with bricks taken from a building being torn down. He painted his restored 1912 Metz burnt orange. He wore burnt orange clothing on any appropriate occasion. He literally surrounded himself and his family with UT’s earth, walls, and spirit. From deep in his heart must have come the words he spoke so many times, “The University of Texas has given me everything I have. The University of Texas made possible everything I did. Whatever I’ve done, it was because of The University of Texas.”

Indeed, Glenn Welsch did do a lot. The potent combination of his personality and the UT environment bettered the lives of all it touched. When he retired from full-time UT employment in 1986, he could look back on a career many of his colleagues admired, and none have matched.

Glenn Welsch was born in Oklahoma in 1915 on land homesteaded by his family. On that supposedly-faded frontier, the horse and buggy were still acceptable means of transportation. Plows pulled by horses still busted the sod. Outside the few Oklahoma cities, people ate mostly what they grew. Walking along the dusty streets could be found many of the Indians and Indian fighters of the Red River War who fought there only forty years before. This frontier life delivered lessons of poverty (the four men in the Welsch family had to sleep in the one bed, Glenn’s older sister was placed with another family), misfortune (the 280-square-foot Welsch family home burned down twice), tragedy (his mother died when he was only three years old), family (due to a stroke, his father had limited stamina; Glenn and his brothers had to work together to run the farm), and love (which kept them together). Those lessons left their mark on Glenn’s character.

Glenn Welsch was a member of “the greatest generation,” serving in the Signal Corps with the 45th National Guard Division in both Europe and the Pacific during World War II. Prior to military service, he earned a bachelor’s degree from Northwestern Oklahoma State College in 1935, then taught typing and bookkeeping to high school students in Alva, Oklahoma. In 1942, at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, Glenn married Irma Richards, an Oklahoma beauty who loved riding horses.

After leaving the military, Glenn briefly sold insurance, and then earned a master’s degree from Oklahoma State University in 1949. Guided by legendary accounting faculty professors George L. Newlove, C. Aubrey Smith, and John Arch White, Glenn earned his doctorate in 1953 and immediately became their faculty colleague. By 1958 he was a tenured full professor and the accounting department chair. This office and that of Associate Dean for Graduate Studies were his only two administrative positions (other than extensive committee service) at UT.

Glenn Welsch’s first love always was teaching. He had a talent for teaching, and teaching rejuvenated him. When he found himself under pressure, he didn’t seek a reduced load. He looked for more teaching to do. Glenn could pace the presentation of abstractions, interspersing ideas with anecdotes, humor, questions, overhead transparencies, pop quizzes, and personal philosophy. It was not unusual for him, even in the large classes he
consistently taught, to know his students by name instantly, wherever they sat. Students quickly came to feel that Glenn’s regard for them individually exceeded that for any other student.

Glenn’s teaching brought him recognition. He quickly received the Jack G. Taylor Award for Teaching Excellence. The American Accounting Association, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants all recognized him with Distinguished Accounting Educator awards. More importantly, everyday in the classroom he won his most important awards, the ones that made all the others possible—namely, his students’ respect and attention.

Glenn’s opening statement to his classes (and to almost everyone else with whom he had an ongoing relationship) ran like this: “My success depends on how effectively I help you succeed. I’ll tell you the truth and I expect the truth from you. I’ll do my best; I expect you to do your best. Help me and I’ll help you.”

When Glenn Welsch wasn’t teaching, he was writing. His living teaching legacy includes thousands of today’s CPAs and business leaders who received at least part of their education from Welsch-authored textbooks. His dissertation, which described corporate budgeting practices in the U.S., became a popular textbook that after many editions was still in use at the time of his death and has been translated into seven languages. With colleagues Smith and White, he authored a long-running series of intermediate accounting text editions and supplements. With Harvard professor Robert Anthony, he authored a popular introductory accounting text. In 1996, these textbooks claimed a combined total of twenty-three editions, and colleagues at over sixty universities had assisted in their preparation. Glenn’s texts became widely adopted because students and faculty liked them. Glenn’s textbooks made the adopting professor look good to students.

These textbook successes and his personal philosophy of working with others caused his American Accounting Association Colleagues to elect him their 1969-1970 president. In the early 1970s he served a term on the Accounting Principles Board (APB), a precursor of the Financial Accounting Standards Board and the Public Companies Accounting Oversight Board. From his own pocket, he would pay the expenses of younger accounting faculty to accompany him to APB meetings, where they could see firsthand the development of accounting principles. On leaves of absence, he was the first person to hold the Blough Chair at The University of Virginia and the Prickett Chair at Indiana.

On the UT campus, Glenn gained the trust and never lost the confidence of the six UT presidents (Smiley, Wilson, Hackerman, Rogers, Flawn, and Cunningham) and four College of Business Administration (CBA) deans (Spriegal, White, Kozmetsky, and Cunningham) who served during his faculty years. As a result, Glenn served as chair or member on a number of result-oriented college and university committees. These included committees that produced the four-point GPA system, the calendar that ends the fall semester before Christmas, the first modern UT MBA program, the Executive MBA Program, the building complex housing the McCombs School of Business, and more. At UT, Glenn was the first faculty member to hold the White, the Peat Marwick, and the Bayless endowed positions.

In the Department of Accounting, Glenn made himself available for all efforts that promised to improve accounting education. As a colleague who would help a faculty member with almost any project, he earned our deepest respect and gratitude. As a student adviser, he took the time to relate personally to every student for whom he was responsible. As a fundraiser, he saw to the endowment of three professorships honoring colleagues (White, Smith, and Zlatkovich), none of which he ever held himself. After his retirement, he even contributed to the endowed chair named in his honor.

Glenn and Irma Welsch enjoyed a lifelong relationship, ended only by their deaths in 2004; first Irma’s, and then Glenn’s a few months later, on October 27, 2004. They had three children: sons, Linden and Andy; and daughter, Mary Ann.

At Glenn’s 80th birthday party in 1995, Glenn heard for the first time Dromgoole’s poem about the bridge builder. Glenn said later that he saw himself in that poem (as did many others). It goes:
The Bridge Builder
An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim
The sullen stream had no fears for him.
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near
“You are wasting strength with building here.
Your journey will end with the passing day;
You never again must pass this way.
You have crossed this chasm, deep and wide—
Why build you a bridge at the eventide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head:
“Good friend, in the path that I have come,” he said,
“There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.”

—Will Allen Dromgoole

Glenn Welsch spent his long life building those bridges for other people, so they could be better prepared to pursue their dreams and lifelONGL journeys. The bridges he built at UT fostered innumerable successful careers and greater appreciation of the important things in life: energy, passion, loyalty, and love. Glenn built similar bridges for so many of us who studied and worked on his beloved Forty Acres. The UT community is therefore an important part of his legacy, and we all join in saying, “Glenn, we love you and we miss you.”