DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR FREDERICK DOWELL WILLIAMS

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Frederick Dowell Williams, professor emeritus, communication studies, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger
Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM FREDERICK DOWELL WILLIAMS

Dr. Frederick Dowell Williams Sr., former Mary Gibbs Jones Centennial Professor of Communications at The University of Texas at Austin, died on May 29, 2010, in Houston, Texas, at the age of seventy-six. He was appointed in both the Department of Communication Studies and Radio-TV-Film at UT and directed the Center for Research on Communications Technology in the College of Communication. He is survived by his six children, Frederick D. Williams Jr., Mary K. Williams, Tiffany Townsend, M.D., Robert Williams, John D. Williams, Peter A. Williams, as well as Amanda Williams, Ph.D. (ward and niece) and five grandchildren.

Fred was born August 14, 1933, in Longview, Washington, of parents Fred and Marie Williams, the former a federal architect, the latter a librarian, author, and published poet. He graduated from Coeur d’Alene High School in Idaho in 1951, received a B.A. from the University of Idaho in 1955, an M.A. from the University of Southern California in 1960, and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1962. From 1955 to 1961, Dr. Williams served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant, touring on the USS Lenawee and teaching in the ROTC program at the University of Southern California (USC).

His academic career began in the Speech Department at the University of Wisconsin, where he was a professor from 1962 to 1969. He then joined the faculty at USC, becoming the founding dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at USC (1973 to 1980). Fred was especially proud of the consulting work he did with Disney while he was at USC, especially the communication technology exhibits in Epcot in Orlando.

In 1991, Dr. Williams was appointed the Mary Gibbs Jones Centennial Professor of Communications at The University of Texas at Austin. He directed the Center for Research on Communication Technology and Society, receiving research support from regional telephone companies, AT&T, and various foundations. At UT, he initiated several research projects that cultivated interdisciplinary approaches and networks among researchers from various departments, leading the way toward a scholarship that was simultaneously engaged and theoretical. He is credited with mentoring a generation of students and young faculty who continue to explore communication technologies in multidisciplinary ways. In particular, he enjoyed working with doctoral students, providing them not only with interesting research projects that would shape their careers, but also with a sense of how to live life and to enjoy the camaraderie of intellectual pursuits.

While in Austin, Texas, Dr. Williams also was a W.W. Heath Centennial Research Fellow in the IC² Institute (“Innovation, Capital, Creativity”), an interdisciplinary research unit of UT, which has advanced the theory and practice of entrepreneurial endeavors. He was appointed as professor emeritus in 1999 and continued his work with IC².

Among his many accomplishments, he served as president of the International Communication Association (1978-79), the premiere professional association in the field of communication, and lectured on communications for the U.S. International Communication Agency. From 1990 to 1991, he served as a distinguished research fellow in the Gannett Media Research Center at Columbia University New York City, where he conducted studies in the future of online information services, in particular, the transformation of the internet from a U.S. Department of Defense project to a public telecommunications network. Over his career,
Dr. Williams authored and edited fifty-four books, including *Reasoning with Statistics, Language and Speech, The Sounds of Children*, and *The Communication Revolution*.

The College of Communication credits Dr. Williams with conducting the important research on and with encouraging faculty interest in the technological trends and industrial opportunities that reshaped media industries in the late twentieth century. The college, the University, and the broader community of technology transfer and innovation scholars owe Dr. Williams their gratitude. He will be remembered as a tireless scholar, as well as someone devoted to bringing people together, in formal and informal circumstances, to explore new research ideas. He lived with gusto and brought his energy and good humor to everyone around him.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Sharon Strover (chair), John Daly, and Larry Browning.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Communication, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on May 03, 2011. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at:
http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.