

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
JOHN A. ROBERTSON**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Professor John A. Robertson, School of Law, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**IN MEMORIAM
JOHN A. ROBERTSON**

John A. Robertson, beloved as a devoted friend, dedicated colleague, and cherished scholar and Professor at The University of Texas School of Law, as a founder and mentor in the field of bioethics, and a supporter of the arts, died July 5, 2017, at the age of seventy-four.

A pioneer of bioethics, John put the field on the map in the legal academy. He published four books and more than 150 articles in top law reviews, medical journals, and bioethics journals, along with countless op-eds and book reviews. His landmark books, *The Rights of the Critically Ill* and *Children of Choice: Freedom and the New Reproductive Technologies*, continue to influence law and scholarship. He was honored in 2010 with a lifetime achievement award from the American Society for Law, Medicine & Ethics and was as much prized as a mentor, collaborator, and friend in the Society as he was here at UT Austin. Always keenly interested in how the world worked or didn't work, he steered his impressive intelligence and insatiable curiosity toward solving some of the most intractable moral and legal problems—and did so with an open mind and generous spirit.

John grew up in Maple Shade, New Jersey, with a father who was a patent attorney and a mother who was a nurse. He headed to Dartmouth and later to Harvard Law School; he clerked at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court before joining the faculty at the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1973. He began teaching at UT Austin in 1980, quickly gaining a following among his students and carving out friendships inside and outside the University. He held the Vinson & Elkins Chair in Law, was active in teaching, scholarship, and the intellectual life of the Law School until his sudden passing last summer. A member of the Texas faculty for over thirty-five years, John had close friends among every cohort and generation, as well as across the campus, reflecting his remarkable appetite and gift for friendship.

In addition to his pioneering academic work and warm presence in the University and his professional community, John was a passionate art collector, a devotee of nearly all forms of music, and a lover of poetry, fiction, and history. And yet no law professor wore his culture and learning as lightly and modestly as John. He was equally at home talking basketball or poetry; whatever your enthusiasms, he gladly shared them. John also shared his art collection. More than fifty works of art from John's collection grace the halls of the law school's new wing: some by famous artists; others, equally gripping, by artists with local reputations. John was excited about both.

John was preceded in death by his wife, Carlota Smith, a Distinguished Linguistics Professor at UT Austin to whom he was married for ten magnificent years before her death in 2007. His survivors include his sister, Carolyn Robertson Schreiber; five nephews and three nieces; his step-children, Alison Smith and Joel Smith, and their families; and the graceful and stalwart Jane Kielty Stott, in whose wonderful companionship he basked in his last years, and who took such excellent, loving care of him to the end.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors William Forbath (chair), Inga Markovits, Richard Markovits, David Rabban and Jordan Steiker.

Distributed to the Dean of the School of Law on November 9, 2017, and posted under “Memorial Resolutions” at <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/facultycouncil/Wiki+Home>.