

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
JEREMIAH FAIN EPSTEIN**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Jeremiah Fain Epstein, professor emeritus, anthropology, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary  
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM  
JEREMIAH FAIN EPSTEIN**

“You are lucky to be going to Texas,” an Ohio archeologist wrote to a high school student in 1958. “A brilliant young archeologist named Epstein has just joined their anthropology faculty.”

Jeremiah (Jerry) Fain Epstein was a scientist with extraordinarily broad interests. Born in New York City on February 14, 1924, he entered the U.S. Army at the age of 18 and served in the Aleutian Islands (1943), Bougainville and Solomon Islands (1944), New Britain (1944), Luzon (1945), and Tokyo (1945). He was awarded a Purple Heart for his wounds and meritorious service. Like many veterans, his army experience had a strong influence on his later life. During a particularly trying experience, he promised himself that if he survived the war he would try first to enjoy each day (and to have a beer with every lunch).

His attitude was that all of us could embrace and master anything that stimulates our curiosity or contributes to the enjoyment of life. He sailed and played squash and Flamenco guitar. He was an expert metal worker and produced metal mobiles that were works of art and engineering. It was completely in character for him to build his modern home on the lake with his own hands. He took flying lessons with the attitude that anyone could fly right side up – flying was more fun upside down!

He used the GI Bill to pursue his college education, earning a B.S. in agriculture from the University of Illinois (1949) and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania (1957). He was broadly trained as an anthropologist: first as an ethnologist, then as a physical anthropologist, but followed his interest to pursue archaeology. His dissertation, which analyzed Late Ceramic Horizons in Northeast Honduras, left him with a life-long interest in technology.

He conducted ethnological field research in Mexico and Guatemala (1953). His archeological fieldwork took him to Arizona (1949), Illinois (1950, 1956, 1958), Belize (1953), Texas (1958-59), Mexico (1960, 1962-67), France (1961), and Honduras (1975). His knowledge of French archeology led him to be one of the first scientists to recognize the wide dispersal of the burin technique in the Americas.

He was chairman of anthropology from 1971-74 when the College of Arts and Sciences was divided into four colleges. It was a difficult period for chairmen, and he had to deal with a new administration and horrendous budget problems.

Jerry’s research interests reflected his eclectic background and experience. His major focus was archaeology of Mesoamerica and Northern Mexico, early man in the New World, long distance trade and contacts, trans-oceanic contacts (a question that took him to the Azores), and boat building traditions from all over the world. The solid research that he pursued in these subjects was supported by real world experience. He could perform the skills he studied – from making an atlatl or a concrete boat. His systematic analysis of Pre-Columbian coins in the United States is a classic treatment of the subject.

Jerry died in his home on December 15, 2005. A wide circle of colleagues, students, and friends who were stimulated by him will miss him dearly. His discipline is less rich with his passing.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Claud Bramblett (chair), Henry Selby, and Thomas Hester.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on December 13, 2006. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, WMB 2.102, F9500. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>.