

DOCUMENTS AND MINUTES OF THE GENERAL FACULTY  
REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
THEODORE ANDERSSON

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a Memorial Resolution for Theodore Andersson, Professor Emeritus, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary  
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM

THEODORE ANDERSSON

The professional life of Theodore Andersson, spanning more than sixty years, was almost entirely dedicated to modern foreign language education. Starting with English, then three years of Swedish, as home languages, he studied two additional languages and their cultures in high school in Connecticut; later, in his years at Yale, together with the traditional study of literature, he devoted himself to several other languages as well as to the methodologies of second language acquisition, needed for his work as a teacher. Subsequently he championed foreign languages in the elementary school. Later, two special fields of interest were early childhood reading in one or more languages, and bilingualism—he was particularly stimulated by the bilingual opportunities in this state when he moved to The University of Texas. In the mid-1980s Andersson wrote that he had missed by only twenty years having a broad vision of one hundred years of language development in the U.S. However, since he was active in his profession almost to the end, it might indeed be said that, except for approximately one decade, he had participated in nearly all the major language developments of the twentieth century.

Theodore Andersson was born on February 18, 1903, in New Haven, Connecticut. His parents came separately by steerage from Sweden to the United States, each at the age of seventeen. Neither had more than a few years' schooling. Dr. Andersson believed that his career in foreign languages had been crucially influenced by something that happened when he was four: his father lost his job in the American depression of 1907, and Andersson and his mother journeyed back to the "old country" to live on his mother's parents' farm. He called the three years he lived there as an impressionable child of four, five, and six, "the most valuable educational experience of my life."

In Sweden he was plunged into a typical bilingual situation. He has said that as a six-year-old, he was speaking authentic "nursery Swedish" and even some "street Swedish" with perfect pronunciation, though English quickly again became dominant when he returned to the U.S. He had already chanced to know some of the psychological trauma experienced by bilinguals in certain cultural situations. In future years he would analyze and interpret his childhood experience, as applied to both bilingual and multilingual learning.

Tug (as he was called familiarly as a boy and forever thereafter by almost all who knew him) remarked that his eight years of grammar school had been "barren of foreign languages." During four years at New Haven High School (1917-1921) he took French and Latin and already knew he wanted "to teach foreign languages." The eminent Yale Italianist Thomas Bergin was his classmate and lifelong friend—these two tried in vain to persuade the high school to offer them Greek. Tug spent four years (1921-1925) at Yale, graduating with a B.A. degree in French, Spanish, and Italian; he earned a four-year College fellowship as well as membership in Phi Beta Kappa. During his six years in graduate school there, he studied under the distinguished Hispanist Frederick Luquiens. He graduated in 1931, presenting a dissertation directed by Professor Luquiens: *Carlos María Ocantos, Argentine Novelist* (New Haven, 1934; Spanish translation, Madrid, 1935).

During the latter part of his graduate studies and for a few years thereafter, until 1937, Tug Andersson held the rank of Instructor in French at Yale. From 1937-1941, he was Professor of French and Spanish and Chairman of Romance Languages at the American University in Washington, D.C. As a colleague there said, Tug "immediately assumed a position of acknowledged leadership among faculty and students. His classes were known as among the toughest in the University, but also among the most effective," with a large following of students. He then served from 1941-1945 as Professor of French and Spanish at Wells College, Aurora, New York, where in his final two years he also acted as Chairman, enjoying as always great success as a teacher.

In 1945, he was appointed Chief of the Western European Section of the Division of Cultural Cooperation and Educational Adviser for the International Exchange, U.S. Department of State. His superior there has written knowingly about Tug's administrative abilities ("a good administrator is the rarest bird in the world"); he also stated he thought that Andersson would not publish much in the literary field but that "he will be productive in writing about administrative and pedagogical problems concerned with his work," in a style always "carefully thought through and admirably expressed." A farsighted assessment.

From 1946-1955, Tug returned to his alma mater as Associate Professor of French and Modern Language Pedagogy. With leave from Yale he served for a year as Professor in Charge, Sweet Briar Junior Year in France (1948-1949) in Paris; for a few months (1952), in Vietnam, as Educational Adviser for the Mutual Security Agency; and for one month (1953), as Director of the UNESCO Seminar on the Teaching of Modern Languages for World Understanding, Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon. And he would attend other conferences abroad on aspects of language learning.

Despite an abiding love for literature, Tug's strongest interests were always in the field of modern language pedagogy, and in his graduate days at Yale there had been no professional degree corresponding to that field. Only after he had been away from Yale for a number of years would that university institute its famed Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree—a program in various fields stressing competence in the subject to be taught, with lesser but adequate emphasis on methodology. Tug was one of its founders, and in the nineteen-fifties, he would be its Director, then its Associate Director (1951-1955).

As his national and international activities on behalf of language acquisition became more and more visible, and in view of his success as the administrator of the Yale MAT program, Tug Andersson seemed the ideal candidate for a challenging new job at the national headquarters of the Modern Language Association of America, in New York. In 1955 he was invited to become Associate Director, and a year later Director, of its vastly-conceived, foundation-supported Foreign Language Program (FLP). For two or three years the FLP had been laying the groundwork for a top-to-bottom reform of a then rather anemic U.S. language teaching profession. When Tug visited the Soviet Union in 1956, he was appalled that its language training program seemed far superior to our own. A year before "Sputnik" he said (referring to foreign languages): "America must wake up—fast—because obviously, this is an area in which the Russians are not only striving to outdo us, but succeeding."

As Tug himself had often done, the FLP stressed the importance of foreign language study as a first step toward international understanding and initiated conferences on Foreign Languages in the

Elementary School—Professor Andersson was already a recognized author and authority in the field. The FLP also sought to encourage preschool and early childhood language acquisition, areas in which Tug was soon to publish significant works; it advocated newer methods of teaching, including electronic media; it urged priority for the listening and speaking of a foreign language (audio-lingual method) ahead of the ultimate steps of reading and writing. The old grammar-translation methods were decidedly out. The associated study of the cultural setting of language, including interdisciplinary approaches, was indispensable. Tug called the new emphasis "language in the new key" and wrote and spoke about it in many forums as Director of the FLP. For the MLA, he performed valuable liaison in Washington, D.C., with the U.S. Office of Education, and with entities of the U.S. Congress who were then putting together radical and unprecedented legislation to be called the National Defense Education Act of 1958, a section of which dealt with the six so-called critical languages to be funded at the graduate level; Title VI would provide financing not only for what it called "language and area centers" but also for related fellowships, teaching materials, book acquisition, and research in the development of methods and materials.

Credit for bringing Tug Andersson to the University of Texas at Austin goes to then Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (later President, then Chancellor) H.H. Ransom, who had observed his work as "skipper" of the MAT Program at Yale and as head of the FLP in New York, the latter being, in Ransom's view, "by all odds the most extensive program for the development of Foreign Language teaching in the history of American education." He offered Tug a professorship in Romance Languages and the possibility of "parallel assignments to administrative work in committees which would encourage our foreign language connections with the schools and other colleges"—a responsibility he subsequently shouldered. Tug liked the opportunities offered here and wasted no time in accepting. Arriving in the summer of 1957, he spent his first academic year teaching Spanish and Modern Language Pedagogy. He obtained a leave of absence in fall 1958 to prepare the definitive edition of *The Teaching of Modern Languages in the Elementary School*; in the following spring, he taught and lectured at the University of Hawaii as its Carnegie Visiting Professor.

Tug's term as Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages began in 1959 and ended in 1968, when this thriving, highly respected, and nationally ranked department was split into two departments: Spanish-Portuguese and French-Italian. It had been thanks largely to the work of Chairman Andersson (and to unwavering support from the Administration) that Portuguese and Italian blossomed during the 1960s. Both formed academically strong sections that were well regarded nationally. A Language and Area Center was established in the Department of Romance Languages, with Professor Andersson as Director. Soon it was transferred to our Institute of Latin American Studies, which had the direction and resources to take fullest advantage of provisions of the NDEA—a relationship with the federal government that continues even now, well into the nineties. Portuguese language and area studies (the latter involving other departments cooperating with ILAS) benefited especially from newly available NDEA Title VI fellowships, funds for visiting professors, library resources, and the like. But Spanish also gained from visiting professors functioning in the Language and Area Center (and later through ILAS). Indeed it can be said that all languages in our department and likewise in other Centers, *e.g.*, Slavic, Middle East, Asian, gained directly or indirectly from the NDEA during the 1960s—someone has called these "the glory years of the sixties." For Portuguese and Spanish there were summer seminars and intensive language programs for high school and college teachers. Tug Andersson was Director or Chairman of numerous such projects during the 1960s and early 1970s, including a number of significant ones in bilingualism.

Those were heady days also for French and Italian, not only thanks to expanded enrollments but especially to the quality of their faculty. Dean Ransom had given his imprimatur to a plan to bring permanently a number of outstanding national and international scholars to the Department of Romance Languages. It was during this time that Tug spearheaded the move to require two years of foreign-language study in high school for entrance into the College of Arts and Sciences, a requirement that survived the assault on all requirements in the seventies and continues on the books to this day.

After reaching age 65, in 1968, and required by University regulations to relinquish the chairmanship, Theodore Andersson shifted his emphasis from departmental administration to pioneering research in bilingual education, including preschool bilingualism and biliteracy. In 1969 he published the definitive second edition of *Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity*. With the collaboration of Professor Mildred V. Boyer, he published *Bilingual Schooling in the United States* (1970). This influential two-volume work was revised by Andersson and republished definitively in one volume in 1978.

A three-year leave of absence from the University of Texas enabled Tug to assume other significant responsibilities—for example, as Chairman of the National Advisory Committee on the Education of Bilingual Children and as a member of the Texas Education Agency's Advisory Committee on Bilingual Education. At the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, in Austin, he served first as Director, USOE Bilingual Design Project, and the following year as Director of the Bilingual Planning and Evaluation Project. When in the fall of 1971 he returned to the University, his official title—Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and of Education—recognized his teaching and other activities in the College of Education. For example, his full time teaching was now in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; and in the Foreign Language Education Center (FLEC) he directed theses and dissertations, served on numbers of graduate committees, and counseled students in the areas of his expertise. In 1973 Tug was appointed to modified service as Professor of Spanish and Education. Though this meant half-time service, Tug's Dean was astonished that he continued full-speed with his professional activities, research, publication, speech-making, and professional travel, almost until 1980, the year he retired as Professor Emeritus.

Thanks to his own experience as a child of four in Sweden learning the national language, Professor Andersson never stopped advocating the concept that "young children learn languages better than adults," if provided sufficient contact with well-prepared teachers, over a long enough period of time. It was self-evident that effective foreign language training in the U.S. translates into better international understanding. During World War II, our national unpreparedness to handle the world's languages made him wince. With a reformer's zeal, he waged a national campaign for more study of foreign languages in the elementary schools. He was a national spokesman for "language in the new key." In the 1960s, campaigning (with others) in behalf of bilingual education, his social goal was to remove the barrier that confronted children speaking a vernacular home language who collided—sometimes painfully—with the "official" language in school. Once the barrier was removed, Tug foresaw positive educational gains in both the home and the school. He more than once spoke and wrote about his feelings of isolation when he returned to the U.S. speaking Swedish and was deemed "different" by his chums. His Texas experience, where "one out of every five Texans speaks Spanish," as he believed, intensified his interest in bilingual education. A related move, finally, was his advocacy of preschool bilingualism and biliteracy. At what age to begin reading? Tug wrote, "As far as the child is concerned, he would generally seem to be ready and eager from the age of about a year and a half."

If in hindsight some of Tug's positions seem overly idealistic or uncompromising, it must be borne in mind that he was an anti-traditionalist and a visionary in the educational field. He fervently believed in the "new key" and in the scientific basis on which its reforms were predicated. He expected school administrators to allow enough sequential years of contact with the second language to produce successful results. He warned elementary schools that studying a foreign language for only a short while without articulation with subsequent courses and without adequately trained specialist teachers amounted to a "fad" to be avoided. He constantly exhorted his fellow teachers, both individually and collectively, to take their profession seriously and to work to improve it.

In his last scholarly article, "A Centennial Perspective," written in 1984, Tug described himself as "a man—an old man—whose eighty-one years have been largely devoted to learning languages and absorbing cultures and who has given more than fifty years of his life to the teaching or promotion of foreign language education and bilingual schooling.... Now at the end of a long career I am filled with disappointments, both personal and professional; but I still nourish the hope that the young women and men

who follow us will succeed better than we have." He listed some "disappointments," for example, that his five years of Latin did not take him "beyond the deciphering stage and left me unable to read satisfactorily." And he listed some "frustrations." One example: "The experiments of introducing foreign languages into elementary schools in the 1950s and 1960s in which I was involved failed because of their timidity and ineptitude but principally because of lack of public support." Another: "As educators we condone the loss of languages acquired naturally and then try to teach a few of them artificially when circumstances are least favorable." And a third frustration, among several others: "As a nation we squander the resources we have in our 150 languages by making our immigrants feel ashamed instead of proud of their languages and cultures." Tug felt that his assessment of the present less-than-satisfactory state of language pedagogy is borne out by recent critical reports on the state of American education, including dissatisfaction with bilingual education. "A Centennial Perspective" is an intense and self-probing statement, and its honesty is a measure of the character of its author.

Many organizations have recognized Dr. Andersson's professional leadership and scholarly distinction. In 1954 the French government decorated him Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. In 1963 he became President of the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana. A signal honor in 1973 was his election by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) to its presidency. In 1975 the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, a group he had helped found, took special notice of his "distinguished service and leadership in the foreign language teaching profession." In 1977, in an appearance with other scholars before the Spanish king, in Madrid, Tug was decorated Caballero de la Orden del Mérito Civil. Once again, in 1985, the AATSP honored Tug for his contributions to the profession, in a special session at its annual meeting in New York City. From 1983 until 1987 he served as President of the International Preschool Reading Association (IPRA). Tug's precarious health made it impossible for him to attend a special session devoted to his contributions to Foreign Language Education, at the annual meeting of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) in Los Angeles on February 18, 1994—Tug's ninety-first birthday—where he was hailed as a "visionary and scholar."

Speakers there, as well as people who knew him elsewhere, have underscored his great impact on bilingual education, on language teaching, and on early reading. One national authority has called Theodore Andersson the "Father of the FLES Movement." There can be no doubt of Tug's pioneering efforts on behalf of bilingual education in the state of Texas, in the mid-sixties when the first bilingual programs anywhere in the U.S. were just beginning. As Director of the FLP he was constantly willing to marshal MLA resources—ideas as well as funds—to help younger scholars. Many of his students and younger collaborators thank him for his decisive and highly personal influence on their careers as language educators: "If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have chosen the field of language education." Tug was positive, encouraging, helpful, "emotionally supportive," in the words of one who remembers him well. He had a great sense of humor. His son, Ted, recalls his "fondness for play and games, which I connect with his obvious sense of fun, a sense of fun that was, in retrospect, remarkably unsatirical and purely appreciative. He loved other people's jokes and, by extension, other people's successes." And one should not forget Tug's sense of social justice, which underlay his devotion to his campaign for bilingualism and multiculturalism.

University of Texas professors who served during the nine years of his chairmanship recall him as the ideal person to head a complex, expanding department. He was adept at facilitating communication and understanding among diverse groups and interests. He presided over the department with fairness, evenness of temper, and a quiet, self-deprecating wit. He combined vision, conviction, fervor, and authority with poise, tact, and concern for faculty, staff, and students. Though he resisted the move to split Romance Languages into two departments, he reconciled himself to it in time and accepted it finally with his characteristic good grace. One professor who knew him well offered this "summary" of Tug: "Organizer, leader, humanist, scientist, great adviser, teacher of teachers, seeker and finder of the 'mot juste,' a man who listened as well as he talked, a man who inspired a whole generation of teachers and students and friends."

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Our friend Theodore Andersson died after a brief illness at St. David's Hospital, Austin, on July 28, 1994, at the age of 91. He is survived by a daughter, Margit A. Clifford and her husband, Timothy, of Seattle, Washington; and a son, Theodore M. Andersson of Palo Alto, California; as well as two grandchildren, Susan and Ted Clifford.

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Fred P. Ellison (Chair), Albert D. Sellstrom, and James F.M. Stephens, Jr.

Distributed to Voting and Emeritus Members of the faculty of the Department Spanish and Portuguese, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on September 8, 1995.

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