

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
PAUL WARD ENGLISH**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Paul Ward English, professor, geography, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM
PAUL WARD ENGLISH**

Professor Paul Ward English died March 30, 2000, at the age of 64. He joined the faculty of the UT Department of Geography in 1963 and, with the exception of the academic year 1965-66, remained there until his death, which occurred in his 36th year on the Austin campus. During that time, he served UT with distinction in several administrative capacities. From 1973 until 1979, he directed the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and from 1982 to 1992, Paul chaired the Department of Geography. He rose rapidly through the ranks, achieving a full professorship in 1970, at the age of only 34.

Born February 20, 1936, in Worcester, Massachusetts, Paul received his bachelor's degree from Clark University, an institution famous for its geography program, in his native city. After one year in the graduate geography program at Johns Hopkins University, Paul went on to study in the geography department at the University of Wisconsin, Madison—at that time the top-ranked program in the nation. There he earned an MA degree in 1959 and a PhD in 1965, under the direction of the famous historical geographer Andrew H. Clark.

Early on, Paul established himself as a leading expert on the cultural geography of the Middle East, carrying out a total of 21 months of extensive (and hazardous) field research in Iran and Afghanistan in the 1960s. His 1966 book, *City and Village in Iran: Settlement and Economy in the Kirman Basin* (University of Wisconsin Press), won the prestigious Herfurth Award. In 1977, he received the Golden Medallion for outstanding career achievement by the Association of Iranian Geographers. But Paul was no mere regional specialist. In 1972, he coedited *Man, Space and Environment: Concepts in Contemporary Cultural Geography* (Oxford University Press), which helped set the broader subdisciplinary research agenda for the following two decades.

Paul English was also an extraordinary and charismatic teacher. His introductory course, GRG 305 (World Cultural/Regional Geography), which he taught at UT for more than three decades, became legendary among undergraduates. Innovatively taught, with abundant visual and auditory aids, GRG 305 was the subject of an article in *Alcalde*, the UT alumni magazine, in 1968, and was instrumental in Dr. English being named one of the most outstanding college teachers in America by *Change* magazine in 1978. The KUT radio station devoted a call-in program to his passing. Each semester saw hundreds of UT students enrolled in this class. Many expressed their bereavement, even months after his death. The legacy of GRG 305 lives on as part of their education and in two widely-used textbooks, at the college and high school levels. The college version, *World Regional Geography: A Question of Place*, went through four editions between 1976 and 1993 and presents English's magical course in prose form. Any intelligent citizen of the modern world can read this book with profit still today. Through this book and its high school counterpart, *Geography: People and Places in a Changing World*, Paul reached a cumulative audience numbering in the hundreds of thousands or even millions.

His upperclass and graduate students treasure most highly Paul's seminar in the Geography of Religion, a course that many found truly inspirational. Paul also helped launch the Oxford Summer Program in Geography, in which UT undergraduates and graduate teaching assistants spent six weeks exploring the wonders of England. Paul was a frequent participant in this program and was particularly drawn to Glastonbury, where his Celtic spiritual heritage remains so pervasive.

Paul was an unreconstructed Irish Catholic Yankee New Englander. His people were, to use his term, "lace-curtain Irish," including mother Mary Riley and father James ("Mickey") English. His middle name, Ward,

derived from his Irish maternal grandmother. He remained true to the heritage of these people in mind-set and dialect, proving impervious to the regional Texan culture to his dying day. Paul sounded and acted like a Boston Kennedy, playing touch football with the same reckless abandon. Yankee, too, was his deep and abiding love of Cape Cod, one of those "mystical places" that so fascinated Paul, places possessing a special spiritual content. He never missed an opportunity to sojourn there. It surprised none of his friends that he requested burial on the Cape.

A strong-minded man, Paul exhibited both decisiveness and vision, skills that served him well as an administrator. These attributes, linked to his keen intelligence, cosmopolitan demeanor, and personal magnetism, made him truly formidable. The rise of UT's Department of Geography to a position among the discipline's top graduate programs in the country is in no small part his doing.

We sorely miss his wit, intellect, charm, and expertise; his charisma, friendship, loyalty, and tolerance; the twinkle in his Irish eyes. Rest well, happy pilgrim.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov (chair), William E. Doolittle, and Gregory W. Knapp.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on January 5, 2001. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>.