

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
ROBERT C. JEFFREY**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Robert C. Jeffrey, professor, speech communication, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary  
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM  
ROBERT C. JEFFREY**

Robert C. Jeffrey was born on November 11, 1927, in San Antonio, Texas. Throughout his life he was proud of his birthplace, including its growth into an international city and convention site, and its development as a commercial and scenic success. Indeed, Jeffrey was responsible for introducing the National Communication Association to San Antonio as one of its convention cities in the late 1970s.

After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Dr. Jeffrey began his academic career. He received his BA in government from The University of Iowa in 1949. He earned MA and PhD degrees in speech from that university in 1950 and 1957, respectively. Between 1950 and 1968, Jeffrey served as a faculty member at Cornell College in Iowa, The University of Iowa, the University of Virginia, and Indiana University. In 1968, he came to The University of Texas at Austin as professor and chair of the Department of Speech Communication. As a scholar, he wrote over 20 articles, monographs, and book chapters in the areas of public address, speech education, communication administration, and ethics in public discourse. He also was coauthor of a much-used public speaking text. Jeffrey was a consulting editor for the *Central States Speech Journal* from 1967 to 1970; and on the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Communication* (1976-1980) and the *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin* (1978-1988). He was the author of many invited papers and speeches, on topics ranging from communication ethics to trends in speech communication education to political persuasion.

One of Dr. Jeffrey's strengths as a scholar and teacher was the infusion of his social conscience into his work. For instance, during the summer of 1963 he edited scripts for, and moderated, a series of half-hour television programs entitled *America: Great Issues, Great Speeches*. The topics of these programs included "Anti-Slavery," "The Women's Suffrage Movement," "Jacksonian Democracy," and "Labor Speaks Out." Throughout his career as a scholar and administrator, he was active in public issues, writing, for example, scripts for thirteen television programs on issues before the Texas State Legislature in the spring of 1979. The programs were broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service's stations, KLRN/U-TV, in San Antonio and Austin.

Dr. Jeffrey directed theses and dissertations in rhetoric and public address, and what would become the area of political communication. He was one of the last great generalists in the field of speech communication—one who made presentations, served on committees, and directed students' work in speech education, speech communication, classical and contemporary rhetoric, and, in the 1970s, the developing areas of organizational communication and political communication.

Robert Jeffrey was nationally known for service to his discipline. He served on the most important committees of the Speech Communication Association (now National Communication Association). He was its president in 1973, and chairman of the Finance Board in three different decades. He was chairman of the Finance Committee of the International Communication Association from 1975 to 1978. He was also president of the Association for Communication Administration in 1977. Jeffrey was on the Administrative Council and he chaired the Constitutional Committee of the Southern Speech Communication Association in 1976. He was executive secretary of the Texas Speech Communication Association (1969-1979). As might be expected, Jeffrey was a much-revered consultant and evaluator of departments and degree programs; he was a guest of approximately 30 universities in this capacity.

Dr. Jeffrey was known across the UT Austin campus for his service to the University at large, not in just his own discipline, department, or college. For many years he was active on the University Council, serving for a time as its parliamentarian. He was on the Faculty Senate, and he was secretary of the Graduate Assembly

(1968-1972 and 1974-1976). He served on the Intercollegiate Athletics Council for Men and chaired the Intercollegiate Athletics Council for Women from 1974 to 1981, a period of time when attention to women's sports was critical for its development on university campuses.

Jeffrey served higher education in The University of Texas System and throughout the state of Texas, as chairman of the chancellor's *ad hoc* Committee on Telecommunication for The University of Texas System (1982) and the Texas College and University System Coordinating Board's Advisory Committee on Telecommunications (1988-1993). He was devoted to community service, as is evidenced by his work as parliamentarian of the Indiana State Senate (1964-1968), and his membership in the Southwest Texas Public Broadcasting Council (1979-1991), the Paramount Theatre Board of Directors (1981-1986), and the Board of Governors of the Headliners Foundation of Texas (1980-1993).

While he had significant influence on his discipline, Robert Jeffrey was known by many on the UT Austin campus as an administrator. He came to the University in 1968 as chairman of the Department of Speech Communication. He was appointed acting dean of the College of Communication in 1978 and dean in 1979. As an administrator, Jeffrey focused on academic enrichment programs, including the Senior Fellows Honors Program, and on the recruitment of international faculty, a diverse student body, and a diverse faculty. He was also a master fund-raiser. By the time he left the deanship, he had raised \$14 million for the College of Communication, which included funding for scholarships, fellowships, and endowed faculty positions, and support for a placement center and academic advising services.

Dr. Jeffrey was the recipient of a number of honors during his career. He was presented the Outstanding Service Award by the Texas Speech Communication Association in 1980. He was selected as the holder of the Allan Shivers Centennial Chair in Communication in 1984. He held the Walter Cronkite Regents Chair in Communication from 1991 to 1993. The National Communication Association honored him with its Distinguished Service Award in 1991. He was listed in the Directory of American Scholars and Who's Who. Additionally, during 1993-94 he was a Senior Fellow at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center in New York.

Robert Jeffrey was a man of many talents and interests. He was an excellent gardener who enjoyed growing vegetables as well as beautiful hibiscus. He was a devoted member of the UT Faculty Center and helped establish a scholarship there in honor of its former director. He was a wordsmith, adept at telling jokes and at crafting policy statements, academic procedures, and mission statements. He enjoyed spectator sports, including debate. He was an avid theatregoer, on Broadway and in Austin. He greatly valued the performance of literature. He was a devoted mentor and loyal friend. Although we miss him greatly, he has left us with such a treasure of memories that we still feel his presence among us.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Patricia D. Witherspoon (chair), Mark L. Knapp, Lynn C. Miller, and John Michael Quinn.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Communication, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on November 3, 2000. 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/>.