

## DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR  
NORMAN M. "JIM" PRENTICE**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution Norman M. "Jim" Prentice, professor, psychology, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary  
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM  
NORMAN M. "JIM" PRENTICE**

Norman "Jim" Prentice died June 4, 2000. He was born February 25, 1925, in Yonkers, New York. Drafted into the army in World War II, he was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Jim earned an AB at Princeton University in 1949, and then entered the clinical psychology program in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University. He received an MA in 1952 and a PhD in 1956. He had trained as a child clinical psychologist. After receiving his doctorate he became a clinical psychologist and fellow in clinical psychology at Judge Baker Guidance Center, in Boston, which was affiliated with Harvard Medical School. In the years that followed, he became director of child clinical psychology at Harvard University and published some of the first research in the field of learning disabilities.

In the mid 1960s, The University of Texas at Austin hired Gardner Lindzey to chair its psychology department and redesign its faculty. Professor Lindzey set the standard high, and recruited the best faculty he could find; this included Norman Prentice. In 1965 Prentice became associate professor of child clinical psychology. He held the same rank in the College of Education.

Lindzey, commenting on those times after learning of Jim's death, wrote, "Naturally, I was delighted when Jim, and family, decided to join us at UT. He contributed enormously to developing a very strong graduate program in clinical psychology; but more than that, he provided a norm of decency and human concern where that was not always present. The single observation about Jim that stands out most vividly in my mind is that in all those years of close association, I never knew him to do an unkind thing. It pains me to think that perhaps his greatest strengths (being gentle, forgiving, sympathetic, honest, and supportive) may have led some others to underestimate his great contributions to psychology and the lives of those around him. I miss him deeply."

Around 1970, Jim assumed the directorship of the clinical psychology training program at the University. He also developed a part-time private practice specializing in child therapy. He became a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology (the highest recognition for clinical competence that can be achieved), and a lifetime member of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, serving for a number of years on its board.

Jim's lack of arrogance and pretence was universally admired. Kevin McFarley, Jim's teaching assistant for two years, said of him, "I think the most succinct example of his lack of pretentiousness was the way he introduced himself to each new class of undergraduate students. This august senior professor of both the Department of Psychology and the College of Education would stand in front of all these 18 and 19 year olds and say, 'Hello, I'm Mrs. Prentice's boy Norman.' I enjoyed giving Jim a big introduction to each class and addressed him formally as Full Professor Norman Prentice (he got a kick out of the 'full professor' title), and the students listened respectfully when I recited the litany of his Ivy League pedigree and many accomplishments. But there were two aspects of his background that always elicited the most reaction from the students. One was his research on the role of imaginary figures in the lives of children—Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny. The students always remarked that they thought that was 'really cool.' They were right, it was really

cool. The students sat up at attention when I told them that, in addition to being an Ivy League intellectual involved in esoteric research, Jim was also a decorated American war hero. Jim's response was, 'A wounded veteran my boy, a wounded veteran.' "

Jim left his mark on the world in many ways—in the research he published, on the students he taught, and on the people he treated as a psychologist. After seeing so much death and nearly dying himself at a very impressionable age, Jim considered every day of his life a gift. He just wanted to be kind and to help people, and he did. He helped a lot of people, and he was very kind. One could not know him without being struck by his non-competitive nature. That is not a quality that one sees in today's academic climate of blind ambition and one-upsmanship. Maybe Jim's war experience was why he didn't feel the need to compete and best other people, or maybe it was just that Mrs. Prentice raised her boy Norman right. Either way, Jim Prentice was a unique personality whose like will not be seen in this department again.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Associate Professors Caryn L. Carlson (chair) and Marc Lewis, and Drs. James Bieri and Kevin McFarley.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on May 31, 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/>.