IN MEMORIAM

JOHN A. LASKA, JR.

John A. Laska, Jr., was born in Clinton, New York. After receiving a B.A. degree in geography in 1951 from Syracuse University, he served on active duty as a Lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserve. Following his military service, he completed his Master of Arts degree in geography at the University of Chicago. Later, he worked as an intelligence analyst from 1958 to 1959 with the Department of the Navy. From Washington, D.C., he moved to the west coast and pursued an Indian studies program at the University of California at Berkeley from 1961 to 1962. It was in the east, however, that Dr. Laska completed his Ph.D. degree in comparative and international education at Teachers College, Columbia University in 1967. Before coming to The University of Texas, he was Assistant Professor at Syracuse University from 1963 to 1965, and Assistant Professor and Research Associate at Teachers College, Columbia University from 1965 to 1967. Arriving at The University of Texas at Austin in 1967, Dr. Laska joined the faculty as an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Philosophy of Education (this department's name was changed to Cultural Foundations of Education in 1970). His teaching included the required undergraduate courses in foundations of education as well as graduate courses in comparative and international education. Dr. Laska's promotion to Professor occurred in 1976, one year after his original department was merged into the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

With his move into Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Laska's teaching expanded to include graduate courses in curriculum theory as well as in instructional theory. His supervision of dissertations enlarged, and he worked with many students from this country as well as students from other countries. Among the areas of investigation that he helped his students explore were: comparative education, grading systems, grading practices, curriculum evaluation and reform, competency based education, mastery teaching, and teacher education. He also served with significance as the Graduate Advisor for Curriculum and Instruction from 1985 to 1990.

Dr. Laska's publications were extensive and included the following books:

Grading and Marking in American Schools. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1992 (co-editor: Tina Juarez).

Schooling and Education. New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1976.

Foundation Studies in Education. Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1973 (co-editor: Margaret Gillett).

Foundations of Teaching Methods. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1973 (co-author: Stanley Goldstein).

Planning and Development in India. New York: Teachers College Press, 1968.

Of special note was Dr. Laska's work in the development of professional associations. In 1968, he founded the American Educational Studies Association (AESA), a learned society encompassing all the foundations of education. He served on the AESA Executive Council from 1968 to 1976. The association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1993. Significant among Dr. Laska's research accomplishments was his founding of *Educational Studies*, a journal of review essays and book reviews published by the American Educational Studies Association. He served as its editor from 1970 to 1975.

Dr. Laska's honors and awards include selection as a Senior Fulbright-Hays Fellow in 1975 for research in West Germany; Outstanding Teacher in the Department of Cultural Foundations of Education in 1972; Foreign Area Research Training Fellow, Ford Foundation, 1961-1963 for research in India; International Fellow, Columbia University, 1960; Robin D. Salisbury Fellow, University of Chicago, 1961; and New York State Regents Scholar, 1947-1951.

Most recently (1993), Dr. Laska was founder of the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum (AATC), a society for the scholarly study of curriculum and teaching that held its first national meeting in 1994.

John Laska was diligent and well organized in his work, spending many weekends and holidays on academic matters. He demonstrated a tenacity in his beliefs but was willing to adapt and change in the light of new evidence. His exceptional organizational skill was demonstrated at local, national, and international levels.

Dr. Laska is survived by his wife, Jaleh Laska, Ph.D., and his son, Ramin Laska, of Austin, Texas.

Robert M. Berdahl, President
The University of Texas at Austin

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors John M. Rich (Chair), O. L. Davis, Jr., and Frank J. Guszak.