IN MEMORIAM

BETTY NANCE WEBER (1943-1979)

On January 10, 1979, the life of Betty Weber, our most promising, energetic, and dedicated young colleague, ended in a traffic accident. She had just returned to Austin from a leave of absence in Germany and was eager to go back to teaching when this tragedy took place. The results of her scholarly work and teaching accomplishments are impressive testimony of a life, of an all too brief career, that was totally dedicated to exciting, occasionally controversial, invariably stimulating scholarship.

Born in a small town in North Carolina, Betty Weber did her undergraduate work at Wake Forest University. After receiving her B.A. from Wake Forest, she studied at the Free University in Berlin, and from there went to the graduate school at the University of Wisconsin--Madison, where she received her M.A. degree in 1968 and her Ph.D. in 1973. She was a member of the faculty of the Department of Germanic Languages at the University of Texas at Austin from 1972 until her death.

In her scholarly work, beginning with a dissertation entitled "Bertolt Brecht and Friedrich Hebbel. A Study in Literary Influence and Vandalism," Betty Weber focused on modern German drama: the new forms, their social content, and their impact, from the plays of Brecht to those of Heiner

Müller. In a scholarly career that lasted only seven years, she produced nine articles, read a large number of papers at national and international professional meetings, wrote a book on Brechts "Kreidekreis," ein Revolutionsstück (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), which was the most thought-provoking critical evaluation to appear in that year, eighty years after Brecht's birth. At the time of her death several more manuscripts and interviews were in various stages of readiness. The Betty Weber Memorial Fund was set up to help complete this material as a tribute to the continuing significance of her work. Genuinely convinced of the necessity for community action, Betty was the catalyst for several significant group projects. She was responsible for bringing the Fourth Congress of the International Brecht Society to Austin in 1976. She was involved in the Women's Studies Group at the University. She founded the Austin Theatre Group which performed Heiner Müller's play Mauser and Thomas Brasch's Paper Tiger, both world premieres. Together with colleagues in the Department of Germanic Languages, she launched a major revision of undergraduate language teaching, an undertaking which was recognized nationally and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

All of us who worked with her saw and felt the enormous intensity with which she pursued her numerous activities, both on and off campus. Betty never did anything half-heartedly, but gave all of herself to the task at hand, with seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm. Hers was a life that burnt

bright, and a life that was always ahead of itself, that lived in the future of yet another project as much as it existed in the present. Betty stimulated the minds of her students and her colleagues, and she profoundly touched the lives of many of us. Her presence in the department is sorely missed. Most of all our thoughts go to her husband Guntram and her young son Lorenz, from whom she was taken away at the height of her vitality and commitment to the world about her.

Peter T. Flawn, President of
The University of Texas at Austin

Bill D. Francis, Secretary
The General Faculty

This memorial resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Walter Wetzels (Chairman), Francis Bulhof, Janet Swaffar

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Articles

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