In Memoriam:

Robert Burns Williamson

Dr. Williamson, unlike many faculty members at The University of Texas, was a native Texan. Born in College Station, Texas, on November 23, 1923, he grew up in College Station and Bryan, Texas. After grade school, Bob graduated from the Stephen F. Austin High School in Bryan, Texas, in May, 1941. In the fall of that year he entered Texas A & M University and was enrolled in the Liberal Arts program until he entered the Army in 1943. He served three years during World War II in the Armored Forces of the United States Army, as a noncommissioned officer at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, but also in combat in Germany.

Upon returning from military service, Bob entered The University of Texas at Austin and received his B.A. degree in Economics in 1947. In 1948-49 he served as an Instructor in Economics at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C. Immediately following his year at North Carolina State, he enrolled in the M.B.A. program at George Washington University, in Washington, D. C., and in 1951 was awarded the M.B.A. degree.
In September 1950 Professor Williamson married Roxanne Kuter. Their three children are Lawrence, Robin and Donald. Between the years 1950-55, Bob was employed by the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D. C. This employment consisted mainly of economists' positions, including head of a 15-20 man unit which forecast borrowers' farm and residential customer sales.

Although Dr. Williamson was working with the Rural Electrification Administration, he found time to enroll in the Ph.D. program at American University. His degree was awarded in 1958, while he was employed at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Texas. Between the years 1955-60, Dr. Williamson served as an Industrial Economist. His principal duties involved the preparation of reports on Southwestern manufacturing, industrial production, employment, and income. He also developed a plan for a series of economic studies of major cities in the region. Along with this series Dr. Williamson, in cooperation with Dr. Phillip E. Colwell, Director of Research, developed a state production index which continues to be published.

In 1960, Dr. Williamson assumed the position of Economist for the Texas Electric Service Company in Fort Worth. His duties required him to initiate a new program of business outlook reports on national and service area economics. In addition he prepared economic and market studies for
particular areas and industries. In 1963 Dr. Williamson felt the urge to return to the academic life and was employed as an Assistant Professor by the College of Business Administration. Concurrently with this appointment he served as Research Associate in the Bureau of Business Research. In 1966 Dr. Williamson was promoted to Associate Professor of Finance.

By the beginning of the 1970's, Professor Williamson had, with the encouragement of the Department of Finance, undertaken a career change entailing transition from half-time service in the Bureau of Business Research and half-time as a finance professor to assumption of a full-time Associate Professorship in the Finance Department. His earlier and contemporary studies and publications in the field of regional economic analysis with the Bureau led to his authorship of a number of articles in such national professional journals as Growth and Change, Land Economics, and Southern Economic Journal.

Bob's interests gradually shifted from the regional to international economic spheres. His instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels was concentrated in courses concerning international finance from a macro perspective.
As he focused increasingly on Latin American-U.S. relationships, Bob was stimulated to participate in a professor-exchange program with the University of Carabobo, in Venezuela, which U.T. College of Business Administration Dean George Kozmetsky had taken the lead in establishing. Professor Williamson's camaraderie with his colleagues and his professionalism, which had long been recognized and appreciated here was soon manifested in his Latin American setting during the summers which he spent there, according to reports from the Venezuelan university and from fellow faculty members here who also served as visiting professors at that university both concurrently and in years succeeding Bob's activities there.

Dr. Williamson afforded the U.T. Finance Department one of its most important links with the Economics Department faculty at the University and a similar multi-faceted, synergistic relationship with the Institute of Latin American Studies. Such relationships found expression, for instance, in the International Conference on Latin American-U.S. Economic Interactions, held at the University in 1973. Bob served as Chairman of the Planning Committee and Coordinator of the conference and was co-editor of a compilation of the papers presented which was published by the American Enterprise Institute, in Washington, D. C., the following year.
During Dr. Williamson's long tenure as a member of the Finance Department faculty at the University, the department was chaired by seven different professors, all of whom recognized and, in numerous instances, voiced appreciation for his cooperativeness and dedication to purpose in committee assignments, program coordination, and other service functions.

After his promotion to full Professor in 1979, Dr. Williamson's administrative service, in addition to his other activities, continued to increase. His is to be indelibly recorded as administrative service of substantial quality and extent, not only to the Department of Finance, but also to the College and Graduate School of Business and The University of Texas at Austin.

He chaired the Department of Finance Long-Range Objectives Committee of 1984-85 and served on the Department of Finance Budget and Executive Councils for several years. On multiple occasions, he also chaired the College of Business Administration Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and The University of Texas at Austin Public Lectures Committee. One of his foremost achievements is that he actively developed the Department of Finance doctoral program's quality and reputation throughout his extended period of service as graduate advisor.
In view of his academic accomplishments, he was appointed to the Margaret and Eugene McDermott Centennial Professorship of Banking and Finance in 1985.

While Professor Williamson will be missed for his many achievements and professional contributions, on a personal level he is sorely missed as the conscience of the Finance Department. The example he provided made a deep and lasting impression, indeed, on many of us.
This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Lawrence L. Crum (Chairman), Ernest W. Walker, and Lewis J. Spellman.