

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
ROBERT F. PECK**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Robert F. Peck, professor emeritus, educational psychology, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM
ROBERT F. PECK**

Robert F. Peck was born September 22, 1919, in Buffalo, New York, and died in Green Valley, Arizona, February 22, 2002.

Bob received a BS in education from New York State University at Buffalo in 1941, an MS in biology from New York State University at Albany in 1942, and a PhD in human development from the University of Chicago in 1951. He also received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree *honoria causa* from Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, in 1974. Prior to coming to The University of Texas at Austin in 1954 as an associate professor, Bob served as vice president and research director for Worthington Associates in Chicago, Illinois, an executive assessment and research company. Bob rose to the rank of full professor in 1959.

Bob's comprehensive thirty-two-year career of teaching and research at the University was centered upon his interests in human development, coping skills, motivation, career competence, moral behavior, and teacher effectiveness. His contributions to the professional literature in each of these areas is notable, yielding scores of articles, papers, government reports, book chapters, and several books.

Included among Bob's most prominent publications are his book *The Psychology of Character Development* with the well-known developmental psychologist R. J. Havighurst, et. al. (John Wiley and Sons), published in 1960, and *Personality in Middle and Late Life* with B. Neugarten, et al. (Atherton Press), published in 1964. Among his other prominent achievements was his invitation to write a widely-read and cited chapter for *The Second Handbook of Research on Teaching*, edited by R. M. Travers in 1973. This publication and the handbook in which it appeared were nationally recognized for more than a decade for their state-of-the-art research in teacher education.

In 1965, Bob founded and served as codirector of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University, one of twelve nationally-funded research and development laboratories which received funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Education for the next twenty years. By some estimates, the Center brought to the University more than 15 million dollars of research funds for teacher education and several new faculty to the College of Education, who later would become distinguished scholars in their fields. From 1977 until his retirement in August 1986, Bob served as senior scholar-in-residence at the Center.

Bob's research interests, however, were not limited to the field of teacher education. One of Bob's most passionate areas of research was his conceptualization and participation in international and cross-cultural studies of education. He served as the director of the Cross-National Study of Coping Styles and Achievement from 1965 to 1981, and in 1984 he completed a five-volume series entitled *Coping Styles and Achievements*, with colleagues from eight countries, funded by the United States Office of Education. In 1981, Bob completed a nearly decade-long project as director of the Teaching-Learning Interaction Study funded by the National Institute of Education and the UT Research and Development Center for Teacher Education (R & D Center). This seminal work, which was among the first to quantitatively study the interaction patterns of teachers and students, consumed much of Bob's research interests during his twelve-year tenure as codirector of the R & D Center.

Much of Bob's work at the R & D Center resulted from earlier work on the mental health of teachers with Oliver Bown and Francis Fuller, who were among Bob's closest colleagues in the Department of Educational Psychology. Their nationally-recognized, ground-breaking research related the principles of mental health to the training of teachers, resulting in a "personalized teacher education system" and comprehensive assessment battery for the selection and training of preservice teachers, which was implemented at several prominent institutions of higher learning across the country, including UT's College of Education. The culmination of this early work, titled *Creating Climates for Growth* and funded by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, was completed in 1967 and provided the conceptual framework for the R & D Center and its funding by the U.S. Office of Education for nearly two decades. Although the theme of the Center evolved throughout these years, its undergirding framework and longevity of funding were due in large measure to this early work.

For most of his career at the University, Bob shared responsibilities as a member of the Counseling Psychology Program and Area II, Human Development in Education, in the Department of Educational Psychology. His academic responsibilities included teaching more than fourteen different courses, including Assessment in Counseling Psychology, Research in Personality Development, Principles of Human Development, Individual Through the Life Cycle, and Personality Assessment, and many topical seminars. During his tenure at the University, Bob chaired or cochaired 36 dissertations in the Department of Educational Psychology, as well as others from throughout the College of Education.

After his retirement in 1986, Bob and his wife, Tina, retired to Arizona, where, until his death, he devoted much of his time to volunteer work providing counseling and consulting services to local community mental health centers. During this time Bob remained professionally active, often keeping in touch with former colleagues at the University to whom he hospitably extended opportunities to visit.

Bob enjoyed lifelong professional memberships in the American Psychological Association (in which he was a Fellow), Inter-American Society of Psychology, Society for Research in Child Development, International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, and American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also a state of Texas licensed psychologist and on the Advisory Board of the Texas Board of Psychological Examiners.

Bob will be remembered as a strong administrative leader with a principled interest in research in teacher education and human development across the life cycle. He was an early advocate of the clarity that quantitative methods could bring to educational research and expected that clarity from those with whom he worked. Besides his passion for research, Bob's affectionate side for colleagues, many of whose careers he stimulated and mentored, was never far beneath the surface. Bob enjoyed classical music and accumulated an extensive library of albums over the years, which he was never shy to play for colleagues. Perhaps most of all, for those who knew him best, Bob will be remembered for his dedication not only to research but also to his wife, Tina, who he was with in a loving relationship, and to his children, Joan L. Dresslar, of Water Island, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Brian C. Peck, Sydney, Australia.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Gary Borich (chair), Guy Manaster, and Toni Falbo.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Education, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on July 30, 2002. 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/>.