DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR ROBERT K. GOLDHAMMER

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Robert K. Goldhammer, assistant professor, geological sciences, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
The General Faculty

IN MEMORIAM ROBERT K. GOLDHAMMER

Dr. Robert K. Goldhammer, age 45, died along with Raquel Vieira de Savariego, an undergraduate exchange student from Brazil, when the University vehicle they were riding in overturned on Interstate 10 between Fort Stockton and Balmorhea. Professor Goldhammer, four teaching assistants, and twenty-three students were heading to El Paso on the first day of the six-week summer field geology course known as GEO 660 or Field Camp. Goldhammer was going to teach the first eight days of class exercises in West Texas and New Mexico before new instructors took the course to locations north.

Bob was lost at a most vital point in his life. We and his wife, Dr. Ursula Hammes, with whom he had two very young and beautiful children, were watching Bob make the transition from industry scientist to academia. As Bob had taken on the dual role of educator and researcher with great vigor, this tragedy extends from family and students to the frontiers of his science, carbonate sedimentology.

R.K. Goldhammer was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He was raised in nearby Winchester and graduated from Belmont Hill High School. He received a B.S. in geology from Colgate in 1979, an M.S. in geology from the University of Oklahoma in 1982, and a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1987. His dissertation involved extensive field work in the Middle Triassic carbonate platform of northern Italy. This work led to two milestone papers on glacioeustatic controls on cyclic carbonate sedimentation. Goldhammer's work was noted for the innovative integration of observations at scales ranging from the microscopic analysis of thin sections to seismic reflection profiles hundreds of kilometers long. He was adept at geochemistry, remarkably insightful in the field, and always strove to put everything into a global context.

Bob was first employed as a research geologist in stratigraphic prediction at Shell Development from 1987-88. He generated a novel sequence stratigraphic analysis of the Permian Basin. He moved to Exxon Production Research where from 1988-1995 he was a specialist in carbonate facies and sequence stratigraphy. His research projects at Exxon took him to Turkey, Texas, Oklahoma, the Canadian Rockies, Colorado, Belize, the Persian Gulf, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, France, Alaska, Mexico, Guatemala, and Papua New Guinea. He was a lead instructor in the famous Exxon Training School with legendary field courses in West Texas, northeast Mexico, and the Bahamas.

From 1995-96, he was a research scientist at the UT Bureau of Economic Geology where he worked on Andean foreland basins in Argentina. He left UT to become a consulting geologist on hydrocarbon plays in Mesozoic carbonate sections around the world. From 1996-98, his list of clients was long. His consulting work usually included seminars and workshops on carbonate sequence stratigraphy. Bob joined one of his clients, Texaco International Exploration, as an explorationist from 1998-2000. His primary assignment was a regional synthesis of offshore Angola and Congo. In this position, he integrated a massive amount of regional seismic and well data with gravity and magnetic surveys to show the dynamic interplay of sedimentation and salt tectonism since the Cretaceous.

Most of Bob Goldhammer's voluminous work in industry is unpublished, but he did find ways to present some of his ideas. He was quick to share credit and had an army of colleagues in both industry and academia that were his co-authors. R.K. Goldhammer was the lead author on twelve major papers and co-author on eight

others. A 1993 paper in the *Journal of Sedimentary Research* on cyclic sedimentation in the Ordovician of west Texas was selected for the "Outstanding Paper Award" from the SEPM.

Bob was an unusually active participant at professional meetings. He organized symposia and gave more than fifty presentations, mostly at American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) events. In 1997, he received the "Outstanding Poster Award" at the national AAPG meeting for a presentation on carbonate sedimentation during ice-house and green-house conditions. Bob was a dynamic lecturer and AAPG selected him as a Distinguished Lecturer for 1994-95. By 2000, he had given invited scientific lectures at twenty-six institutions. He was the leader or co-leader of ten field trips to Italy, West Texas, and northeast Mexico for professional societies and four field trips for industry groups.

Bob joined the Department of Geological Sciences as an assistant professor in January 2001. At the undergraduate level, he taught the carbonate half of GEO 416M, Sedimentary Rocks, a core class required for all undergraduate majors. He also taught GEO 660, Geological Field Camp in 2001 and 2002 and was heading out with the group when he died. At the graduate level, he taught two courses: Carbonate Petrography, Facies and Diagenesis in the fall semester and Carbonate and Evaporite Stratigraphy in the spring semester. For both classes, he personally presided over a Friday afternoon laboratory that lasted for many hours. This lab was centered on a large collection of rock samples, polished slabs, and thin sections that he had assembled from around the world and on exercises he had created during his years teaching short courses in industry. His students have catalogued the collection for the benefit of generations of future students.

Bob Goldhammer received rave teaching evaluations for his undergraduate courses. Many undergraduates simply wrote "Great job," "Great teacher," "Awesome teacher," on their evaluations. At the graduate level, the praise was even greater. Students wrote comments such as the following: "This class is the best I've ever had. I was lucky to have such a great teacher." "Goldhammer's classes have been by far the most valuable and enlightening of my educational career." "This class was easily the best class I've ever taken in my whole geology education."

Bob Goldhammer won the Knebel Teaching Award at the end of his first full year of teaching; this is an award based solely upon a vote of the students. He won the College of Natural Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award which is based upon class evaluations and nomination by the Chairman at the end of his second full year of teaching.

Bob created an industry-supported research consortium to which six companies had subscribed and others were planning to support. He called the endeavor "Mesozoic Margins." Major field projects with students were underway in Mexico on the interplay of salt movement with sedimentation in the La Popa Basin and the effect of carbonate-evaporite layering on the structural evolution of the Sierra Madre foldbelt. More general projects were underway on stratigraphic controls on fractured reservoirs and structural controls on stratigraphic architecture.

During his two years on the faculty, Bob published one major research paper and had another one in review. He wrote two of the major chapters in the *Encyclopedia of Sediments and Sedimentary Rocks* that was released in late 2003. He gave eleven invited lectures to professional organizations and was author or co-author of eighteen presentations at meetings, six of which were with his students. Those who saw Bob at the 2003 National Meeting of the AAPG in Salt Lake City report that the three lectures he gave, on very different subjects, were outstanding. The poster presentations with four of his students each drew large crowds. The Robert K. Goldhammer Memorial Fund has been established by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists to benefit student research in carbonate rock geology.

During his short time at the University, Bob led students on four field trips to Mexico, two to the Arbuckles in Oklahoma, one to West Texas, and one to Italy. He also arranged for students to go to see modern carbonate sedimentation in Belize. He worked very closely with a talented and motivated group of graduate students. Barbara Tillotson and Tina Foster completed M.S. theses under Bob's supervision. Six other students were working on theses or dissertations under his supervision at the time of his death. All have pledged to continue their work in Bob's memory, and two have already finished.

A ceremony was held to celebrate the lives of Bob and Raquel on May 31, 2003, in the UT Alumni Center. More than 400 friends attended. Dozens of Bob's co-workers from industry and faculty from universities across

the country came to show their respect. They recounted his exploits and many recalled his vitality and keen wit. His graduate students created a 42-inch high, 15-foot long photo montage that recorded events in his life. Bob was a gifted guitar player and all who participated in his field trips recalled evenings around the campfire. He had a special ability to motivate people and is remembered as a teacher for all — the geologist's geologist.

Bob Goldhammer leaves behind his beloved wife of 10 years, Dr. Ursula "Uschi" Hammes, a fellow geologist (and research scientist associate at the Bureau of Economic Geology), that he met while leading a field trip in The Dolomites of northern Italy. They have a daughter, Nora, age 4, and son, Max, age 1. He is also survived by his parents Robert F. Goldhammer and Joan O'Neil, his brother Richard Goldhammer, and his sister Susan Davis.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Mark Cloos (chair), Gary Kocurek, and Scott Tinker.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the executive vice president and provost, and the president on June 14, 2004. 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/.