

RESOLUTION ON THE RETIREMENT OF

JOHN SCHUYLER GIBSON

Adopted by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
at its meeting on  
May 15, 1995

The members of the Department of Political Science, and the faculty of Liberal Arts and Jackson College of Tufts University, hereby record our warm appreciation for Professor John Schuyler Gibson, upon his retirement after more than 32 years of service.

This Sunday, over one thousand young people will gather on our lawns to receive their Bachelor's Degrees. A significant portion of them will be graduating as majors in International Relations. In its eighteen years of existence, the IR major has grown into one of our most popular. These students will have experienced a curriculum which this year has earned Tufts the distinction of the single most respected undergraduate program in international relations in the United States, outranking even our Cambridge cousins.

In 1977, President Mayer, sensing that Tufts could move towards such a prominent role, encouraged the creation of the program. With others, John Gibson responded with enthusiasm and energy, shaping the enterprise and serving as its first Director, for seven years, and later for another four years. He has rightly been regarded as the "father of International Relations at Tufts."

That John should respond with such gusto and dedication to a Tufts initiative might seem unremarkable, given his well-known ebullience. Yet it must be noted that this wholehearted effort came just a few years following his having been treated harshly by the University--by a previous administration--in ways that might have driven a less resilient person to bitterness and withdrawal. The action--a decision not to reappoint Professor Gibson to his position at that time, as Director of the Lincoln Filene Center--caused not just personal hurt, but also perilous injury to the Center itself.

Ten years before, in 1963, John had come to Tufts and to the Filene Center, at a time the latter was being moved by its then Director, Franklin Patterson, to a new level of activity and visibility on the campus, adding three faculty members and the handsome building next to Braker. In coming here as one of the three, Gibson left an outstanding history of achievement at Babson College, as its Chair of Liberal Arts and then its Director of Development.

Within two years of this expansion, Patterson left Tufts to found Hampshire College, and Professor Gibson was chosen to become his successor as Director of the Center.

For our nation, these were times both heady and troubling; for the Lincoln Filene Center, they were the "glory years." With its focus being the intersection of education with citizenship, Gibson led the Center into an impressive array of research efforts and curriculum innovations, primarily though not by any means solely directed towards improving race relations. The Center gained prominence in Boston, in the nine states of the Northeast, and in the country, demonstrating unmistakably the ability of a university to play important "hands-on" roles in "real world" settings. Many contributed to this fertile period, of course; but it was John Gibson who had the vision and determination--to say nothing of good contacts and good humor!--to lift the Lincoln Filene Center to what may have been its historical zenith.

We have been walking backward through John's life, and now take a leap larger than usual in such reviews--not to year zero, to be sure, but close: to Year Four. At the age of four, John met for the first time, in a play group, two-year-old Edith Rhorer. Two decades later, after college at Oberlin and Wabash, respectively, and the start of graduate study, the two of them married... culminating, as they say, a long courtship. After his graduate years at Northwestern, Western Reserve, and Columbia Universities, John's subsequent work included Directorships of the Rhode Island and Boston World Affairs Councils. There were six children, all now impressive young adults. Three, indeed, are graduates of Tufts; and Edie herself earned her Master's Degree in French here.

Now to the present, and retirement plans: John intends to continue his profession-long interest and involvement in human rights issues, and in the international organizations which try to deal with these and other crucial matters. For John and Edie personally, illness has complicated these recent years, so it is particularly heartening to learn that their retirement is to start, this summer, with a return visit to Talloires, a milieu for Edie of her favorite language and culture; and for John, close to Geneva, where so much of his work has taken place.

In sum: "John Gibson has given Tufts University outstanding teaching and advising, representing the highest standards of the teaching profession. He has been a model of dedication for students and colleagues, and has demonstrated a level of decency, civility and disposition which has shone on every member of the Tufts community. He has truly brought the light to this hill..."

These last few words of summation are not ours; instead, they grace the certificate of the Seymour O. Simches Award for Distinguished Teaching and Advising, presented to Professor Gibson two weeks ago. Although not of our authorship, the words are a direct expression of our sentiments as well--our admiration, our appreciation, and our fondness of John. We wish him, always, pax et lux.

Be it resolved that this resolution be spread on the minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and that a copy be sent to Professor Gibson.

Bradbury Seasholes  
For the Department of Political Science

THIS COPY OF AN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT  
FROM THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES  
IS FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY AND MAY NOT  
BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION