

Holt, F. Shep

RESOLUTION ON THE RETIREMENT OF
F. SHEPPARD HOLT
ADOPTED BY THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OF
TUFTS UNIVERSITY
APRIL 29, 1985

After thirty years of teaching Tufts students, F. Sheppard Holt is retiring. Consistently, he has been both a popular and effective teacher, because his lectures were well-organized, and his responses to questions were clear and to-the-point. As a member of this faculty, he has contributed to order and civility at Tufts by being a direct, open, respectful and cooperative colleague.

Shep is the son of a Naval Officer so he was shaped more by that tradition than by any of the communities to which he moved as a young man. Navy children are influenced by their mothers too. Shep's mother taught him to play tennis and played against him until he could win consistently. Although Shep had hoped to attend Annapolis and had trained extensively for their hazing, he did not pass the physical examination due to a temporary weakness in one eye. Instead he went to Kenyon College which he liked so much that he decided not to re-apply to the Naval Academy. As an undergraduate at Kenyon his mathematical talent flowered. He was installed into Phi Beta Kappa. He played tennis, too, winning a position on one of the nation's top-ranked varsity teams.

Kenyon awarded him the A.B. degree in 1941 and, as the war approached, Shep decided to continue his mathematical studies at M.I.T. In 1942, he became a Research Associate for the Theoretical Group of the M.I.T. Radiation Laboratory. This was the beginning of a professional career devoted to the theory of electromagnetic radiation, antenna design and radar. It was during this stay at Tech that Shep learned to play squash.

In 1943 he joined the Navy and was trained to be a radar officer. Seeking active duty, he volunteered for the Submarine Service and was assigned as the D.E.T. (Deck Engineering Technician) on a submarine in the South Pacific. Active it was. He was astounded at their "good Luck" in finding so much Japanese shipping. They always seemed to be in the right place at the right time. It was not until after the war that he learned that we had deciphered the Japanese code.

Upon severance from the service at the war's end, he returned to M.I.T. as an Instructor of Mathematics and graduate student. He continued playing squash but also took up figure skating at the Boston Skating Club where he skated with Emily, a freshman at Wheelock whom he had known since childhood summers spent at the Thousand Islands. For thirty-seven years they have belonged to the Club and for thirty-five years they have skated in its annual Ice Show. Also they skated in regional dance competitions winning the New England Junior Dance Championship.

Obtaining the Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematics from M.I.T. in 1950, Shep accepted a position as mathematician at the Antenna Laboratory of the Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratories. This was the beginning of a long and successful research collaboration with the members of the Lab. From 1950 to 1980 Shep presented eleven papers at technical meetings, contributed to sixteen Laboratory Reports, published eight articles in technical journals or books and was granted seven patents.

In 1955 Shep decided that he would rather continue his research and teach than move to an administrative position in government service. He reduced his commitment to the Air Force to a part-time position and accepted a position as an Instructor of Mathematics here at Tufts. The next year he was promoted to Assistant Professor; soon he was teaching our courses in Complex Variables and in Advanced Calculus for Applications as well as the elementary courses. In 1960 he was granted tenure and promoted again. About this time he designed our course, Topics in Applied Mathematics. When Tufts started its doctoral program in mathematics, Shep created our graduate level course, Complex Analysis. He was promoted to Professor in 1970.

An active member of many of the faculties of this University, Shep has worked on many committees. In the Department he has chaired the Graduate Committee for about ten years. For the Liberal Arts and Jackson he has chaired the Subcommittee on the Distribution Requirement for the last three years. However, he is best known for his six years as the chair of the Athletics Committee. It was during this period that Title IX led Tufts to expand its athletic programs for women. His leadership, poise and self confidence helped Tufts move toward parity and equity as the Tufts and Jackson athletic programs were unified. While the rate of change set by the Committee was too slow for some and faster than others were inclined, we can all agree that the changes were progress toward fairness.

Shep is the best squash player that most of us will ever know, but few of us realize just how good he really is. When Shep turned forty, he entered the State Championships in the over forty category. He was the State Champion for 1961 and 1962. Although he was unable to compete for about ten years due to a back injury, he returned in the over fifty category and was the State Champion in 1974, 1975 and 1976. His highest athletic award was being the National Squash Champion in the over fifty-five category for 1977.

A devoted husband and father, Shep is most proud of his family. All three of his children graduated from one of Tufts undergraduate programs. Caroline graduated from B.S.O.T., Allison graduated from Jackson College and Craig graduated from the College of Engineering. Shep and Emily have enjoyed their summer weeks with their family at their summer house, Longpoint, on Grindstone Island in the Thousand Islands section of the Saint Lawrence River. We wish them many happy summer months together there in the future.

For the faculty,

COMMITTEE: George F. Leger	<i>George F. Leger</i>
William F. Reynolds	<i>William F. Reynolds</i>
James W. Schlesinger	<i>James W. Schlesinger</i>