

Tessman, Jack

RESOLUTION OF THE RETIREMENT OF

JACK R. TESSMAN

MAY 1986

Jack Tessman came to Tufts University in September 1955 as a Visiting Lecturer in Physics; in 1956 he was appointed Assistant Professor, in 1958 was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, and in 1972 was made Professor of Physics. From his first appointment to the present, he has been an innovator in the teaching of physics (particularly to non-scientists and to secondary science teachers).

In the Physics Department he has taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; at the latter level he developed the Department's first graduate courses in statistical physics and in theoretical solid-state physics. In recent years Jack developed and taught a two-course sequence for undergraduates entitled Physics for Humanists. These were often favorite courses for students who were majoring in the humanities and who had many apprehensions about studying the sciences, especially physics. For many, selection of Jack's courses was initially a means of satisfying the "science" requirement. But, after being in the course for a little while, they found themselves as enthusiastic and dedicated as Jack was in appreciating the "facts and concepts of classical and modern physics." The course description gives us an insight into Jack's deep consideration of the interactions between science and society.

"For those who are intellectually and emotionally curious but do not intend to specialize in the natural sciences. Facts and Concepts of classical and modern physics; eminent scientists and the emotions which have impelled them; nuclear energy and nuclear bombs; the interaction, both constructive and destructive, between science and society."

His continuing concern for teaching and the myriad ways of learning are found in many aspects of his involvement throughout the University. He was one of the founding committee of the Experimental College in 1965, and participated actively in its development. He was a leader in the development of Independent Study under the sponsorship of the Experimental College.

From 1958 to 1960 Jack was Director of the PSSC In-Service Institute. He continued his work in this area as a colleague of Anthony P. French and others at the Science Teaching Center at MIT. Several publications on electromagnetic theory, vibrational systems, and special relativity resulted from this collaboration.

For many years Jack was the faculty parliamentarian, and served both as a member and chairman of the Faculty By-Laws Committee. Throughout the years, the faculty has benefitted from the care and precision of both the by-laws and faculty minutes resulting from Jack's careful preparation and review. He has served on many other faculty committees, both elected and appointed, including the demanding committee on Student Life; he is especially known for his recent work on the Faculty Grievance Panel. Jack's work on AAUP committees, especially committee Z, has been very significant for the Tufts community.

On most faculty committees today we have student representation. One of the bases for this is Jack's early work on the Board of the Experimental College which is one of the earliest academic committees on campus to have voting student members.

In 1980 Jack's book My Back Hardly Ever Hurts Anymore was published. For many of his colleagues and friends it has filled a real need.

We appreciate the many contributions which Jack has made both to the Physics Department and to the University. We will miss the wit and wisdom of this wonderful man, whose intellectual curiosity is ever broadening. We wish him well in his active "retirement" at the University of California, at Berkeley, and at the Exploratorium.

A.M. Cormack
K.A. McCarthy
R.H. Milburn
J. Schneps