WINFRED P. LEHMANN

Winfred P. Lehmann ('Win' to all the world), president of the LSA in 1973, joined the University of Texas faculty in 1949 as a professor of German. When he retired in 1985 as Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor Emeritus in the Humanities and heaped with honors, he could look back on a record of public and personal accomplishment in academics that now seems out of reach for any one person. He chaired two departments at the University of Texas at Austin—Germanic Languages and Linguistics—into the top five in the ratings of graduate programs in North America where they remained for some twenty-five years. He directed the Linguistics Research Center of the University of Texas from 1961 until his death in 2007. He was elected president of the two most important and prestigious professional organizations in linguistics and the modern languages, the Linguistic Society of America and the Modern Language Association, the only instance in which a single individual has been elected to the presidency of both organizations. And he accomplished all of this at little if any cost to his personal scholarship: he published well over three dozen books and hundreds of scholarly articles, organized and participated actively in conferences, went to all the meetings, kept up his Washington and New York connections, and taught full-time through it all. After his retirement from the faculty of the University of Texas in 1985 the only thing different was that he no longer taught; he continued to publish books and articles and to secure funding for the Linguistics Research Center as he had done for so many years.

Lehmann was born June 23, 1916, in Surprise, Nebraska, and died August 1, 2007, in Austin, Texas. His father was a Lutheran minister, and the family language was German. His was, as he would later say, a family in which books and reading counted for a great deal. The family moved to Wisconsin while Lehmann was young, and he got his B.A. in humanities from Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1936. In this German-English bilingual stronghold, he gained a European *gymnasium* background he later described as 'German and classical philology' (1980:183). From there, he went on to graduate study in German literature and Germanic linguistics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 1938 and 1941. It was in classes at the University of Wisconsin that he met his future wife, Ruth Preston Miller; they were married in 1940 and had two children, Terry and Sandra. Dr. Ruth Lehmann was an internationally recognized scholar of Celtic and Old English who ended her career as professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin. She and Win made a powerful intellectual and scholarly union, besides being loving parents to their two children, one of whom, Terry, tragically preceded his father in death. After Win suffered a stroke his daughter, Sandie, cared for him devotedly until his death. Dr. Ruth Lehmann died in 2000.

Lehmann's later broad ken was clear already in his first semester courses at Wisconsin, which included courses on Milton, Homer, a survey of German literature, and the history of the German language, the last taught by the Balticist and Indo-Europeanist Alfred Senn. His later graduate work at Wisconsin ranged widely across languages, from Old Church Slavonic and Lithuanian to Old Irish (with Myles Dillon) to Sanskrit

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and Old Persian. He also worked with Einar Haugen, whose fieldwork on Scandinavian in the region would lead to Lehmann's own pioneering work in sociolinguistics and bilingualism. Beginning with Morris Swadesh's time in the anthropology department, Lehmann spent 'hundreds of hours' working on Winnebago (Siouan, now known as Ho-Chunk or Hocąk) with Chief Hamparika. None of this work, unfortunately, was ever published.

There were no linguistics departments as such in those days—the creation of departments of linguistics was a post-World War II development. If you were interested in things linguistic, you did your work in a language department with excursions into other language departments and English departments depending on who was teaching what where. The scholars and courses just mentioned offered rich opportunities for learning old and new approaches to linguistics, including of course Neogrammarian and American Structuralist theory, but also European theorists like Saussure and the history of linguistics. Lehmann's department was German, in which Wisconsin was highly regarded in the 1930s, and there he took courses on phonetics, and in Indo-European and Germanic philology. The professors whom he cited most often as having had an influence on him were Roe-Merrill S. Heffner in phonetics and W. Freeman Twaddell on other matters Germanic and linguistic. He wrote later of having spent 'several thousand hours in [Heffner's] laboratory—a bleak cavern—recording and measuring vowels on a kymograph' (1980:184). That work led to a string of articles in *American Speech*, published under both names (starting with Lehmann & Heffner 1940), and later a larger research report (Hewitt & Lehmann 1965), work still of importance today for American dialectology and sociophonetics. Lehmann's doctoral thesis (1941), codirected by Heffner and Twaddell, was on the thorny problem of the origins of the 'dental preterite' marker of weak verbs in the Germanic languages.

He managed to finish his Ph.D. work just about the time the Second World War broke out, and like many linguists of his generation, Lehmann served during the war in the US Army Signal Corps (where languages needed for the war effort were taught). Lehmann became an instructor in Japanese, a language for which his academic training at Wisconsin had not prepared him. Later he served as officer-in-charge of the Japanese Language School.

He attributed much of his success as a linguist to his wartime experience with Japanese, a language very different in its structure from the mostly Indo-European languages he had studied before. Doubtless too it contributed to his later success as an administrator that he was officer-in-charge of the Japanese Language School, riding herd over an often rowdy band of academics sidetracked by the war into activities uncongenial to many of them.

With the war over he accepted a position at Washington University in St. Louis as instructor and assistant professor in the Department of German (1946–1949). The situation was not satisfactory. Most of his teaching was in German language courses, and there was very little in the way of linguistics or philology. To get back into linguistics he made arrangements with Leonard Bloomfield to spend a summer at Yale getting up to speed on what had transpired in theoretical linguistics since he had completed his graduate work at Wisconsin at war's beginning, but that came to nothing as Bloomfield suffered a debilitating stroke from which he never recovered.

In the meantime, however, things were getting interesting at Texas. The University of Texas was at that time, as Lehmann once put it, 'a robustly genteel southern university with about 12,000 students' (1980:187). But it had a remarkably strong tradition in philology, the study of written records from a linguistically informed point of view,

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and the library was surprisingly good in most of the major languages. In 1949 he was recruited to the University of Texas as an associate professor of Germanic languages; in 1951 he became full professor.

He was named chairman of the German Department (later, Department of Germanic Languages, now Department of Germanic Studies) in 1953 and embarked on a highly successful program of building first-rate programs in both German and linguistics. The 1950s and 1960s were favorable to such aspirations, especially after Sputnik drew big federal money into languages in general and linguistics in particular through the NDEA (National Defense Education Act).

Texas proved an unexpectedly good stage for Lehmann's personality and ambitions. The era 1955–1965 at the University of Texas belonged to Harry Huntt Ransom, who was named president in 1960 (and whose creation, the Ransom Center at the University of Texas, is now one of the major humanistic archival libraries in the world). On the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the university's founding, in 1957, the 'Committee of 75' challenged the University of Texas to become more than a 'robustly genteel southern university' and to make a run at national greatness. Ransom was determined to make the committee's challenge more than one more meaningless rhetorical flourish of yet another naively enthusiastic committee report. The stars were aligned: money was abundant, the then-huge (through oil) endowment belonged to the University of Texas at Austin alone, the power structure of the state wanted a university of the first class, manners had come to the frontier, and Ransom had the charisma and connections to bring everybody together and to make things happen. Things did happen, and nowhere more impressively than in the language departments and linguistics.

Ransom liked Lehmann and became his strong supporter, making sure that Lehmann got what he wanted to realize his dreams. Those dreams included world-class conferences in both linguistics and German literature, two Linguistic Institutes (1960, 1961), a Visiting Writer's Program, visiting professors in German and linguistics, and first-rate hires. Texas conferences throughout the 1960s did as much as anything else to provide a forum for the new ideas coming out of MIT. By 1965, when the Carrter Report, the first of the rankings of graduate programs that since have come out about every ten years, appeared, the Department of German at Texas was rated in the top five such graduate programs at all universities, public and private, in North America.

At the same time as he was taking the German Department into the star class, Win headed up the Program in Linguistics. Ph.D.s in linguistics were offered through the German Department from the 1950s through 1964. Win Lehmann was not about to let a little thing like not having a department of linguistics stop him and the faculty he recruited from directing Ph.D. theses in linguistics. In those years a Ph.D. in 'German' from the University of Texas could and did include dissertations on Arabic, Telugu, Hindi, Farsi, and purely linguistic topics (such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). Almost ten percent of the linguistics Ph.D.s awarded in the United States during that period came from Texas.

Those were glorious days for linguistics at Texas, and all of it was due to Lehmann and the faculty he had hired. When the Department of Linguistics was formally created in 1964, Lehmann became its first chairman, a position he held until 1972. In the 1970 and 1980 ratings of graduate programs, both Linguistics and Germanic Languages were in the top five.

But there was much else besides. For five years beginning in 1960, he was acting chairman of Slavic Languages. He founded the Linguistics Research Center in 1961 and served as its director until his death; the LRC brought millions of dollars in research

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grants to UT to study machine translation—computer translation of languages—and, later, historical linguistics. (The LRC is possibly the only organized research unit at the University of Texas that, apart from space, never got a nickel from the university.) Other UT centers for which he was at least partly responsible, by virtue of securing their initial funding and naming their later directors, included the Arabic Center (later the Center for Middle Eastern Studies) and the Hindi-Telugu Center (later the Center for South Asian Studies).

The Departments of Linguistics and Psychology at Texas owe much to the National Science Foundation development grant that brought in five million dollars to the university in the late 1960s to make new hires in those departments. Lehmann and Gardner Lindzey, chairman of the Department of Psychology, later Graduate School dean at UT and director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, were co-stewards of this grant, which supported faculty hires in syntax and semantics, in experimental phonetics, and in psychology.

And of course he taught generations of students. Even in the rich intellectual environment Texas provided, students stood in awe of Lehmann, sometimes too much so. A story told among graduate students in Linguistics and Germanic Languages at Texas during the late 1970s reflected an effort to get students thinking about rather than copying his lectures: Lehmann got the sense at some point that rather than engaging in critical classroom discussion, students were just trying to write down every word he said. One day, in response, he went to the board and slowly drew the four sides of a rectangle, somewhat higher than it was wide, which the students dutifully copied. Then beside it, he drew another rectangle, very narrow and of the same height. When the students had copied that, he turned to the class and announced: 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is a schematic drawing of a piece of paper. Here, we have the side view. Now, let's move on.' According to the story, discussion immediately picked up.

In the classroom, Lehmann's presence was professional and consistently understated, but that could hardly mask his commitment to bringing students along. In an introduction to Gothic, he asked on the first day how many knew any significant amount of Greek—a language he had had six years of before entering graduate school. When virtually no one raised a hand, he simply announced that the class would 'bootleg a little Greek' along the way, which he then proceeded to do.

In an era when students simply waited after the semester for grades to arrive in the mail, Lehmann provided typed and sometimes quite detailed letters evaluating student papers and general class performance. Here as always, Lehmann constantly encouraged students to pursue and develop ideas, with an eye toward publication. Time and again, he stressed that publication was the crucial act of professional communication. For at least some students still grappling with the day-to-day demands of coursework, it was a life-changing experience to hear that students should be expected to advance knowledge AND to communicate the results at conferences and in journals.

All of this empire building, along with teaching and mentoring so many students across several departments, impeded his scholarship and publication little if at all. Beginning in 1938 he authored or edited more than fifty books and special issues of journals, his last printed book being *Pre-Indo-European* in 2002 (when he was eighty-six years old). He published over 250 journal articles and more than 140 reviews of scholarly works from 1940 to 2006. Lehmann wrote that, in his early days in the profession, 'One had to have arrived to publish in the thin issues of *Language*' (1980: 185). In this journal alone, the entries under his name in the *Twentieth-century index* run from page 329 to 331, covering publications from 1942 until 1999, one of the

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longest sets in that thick index, and his publications included eleven single-authored research papers. His full bibliography far exceeds what could be printed here, but it is available online: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/general/facultyhomes/wpl-pubs.html.

The books he wrote or edited cover a range one expects to see represented in a personal library, not in the personal output of a single scholar—aside from what most would consider his core scholarly contributions, these books run from word-indices of Middle High German literary works and grammars of Japanese, Old Irish, and Biblical Hebrew, on to computational linguistics and German-language textbooks and readers.

Nor can one declare one or two works or topics the most significant without betraying one's own interests and biases. In Indo-European linguistics alone, his single-authored monographs began with *Proto-Indo-European phonology* in 1952 (hailed by Hoenigswald (1954) in these pages for its 'handsome contributions to special problems' and as 'a courageous effort'), through his 1974 *Proto-Indo-European syntax* (praised as a 'genuine breakthrough' and one that would 'serve as a frame of reference for future research for years to come' in Jeffers 1976), and closed only a half century later with the already-mentioned *Pre-Indo-European* from 2002. Many Germanic historical linguists would immediately and justifiably point to his *Gothic etymological dictionary* (1986), copies of which they keep at hand on their desks, as the best single modern work on Germanic etymology. While the work is listed on the title page as being 'based on' Feist's *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache*, that hides the vast and fundamental differences between the two books.

In a memorial on the LSA website (http://www.lsadc.org/info/lsa-memoriam-more.cfm#lehman-justus), Paul Hopper stresses—again with good reason—Lehmann's landmark works in and contributions to the rise of functional linguistics and to modern typology, especially their application to historical and comparative linguistics. Especially in the 1970s, he devoted great effort to this search for 'The great underlying ground-plans', as he titled his introduction to the 1978 volume he edited on linguistic typology. Many readers have been introduced to one major field of linguistics by his *Historical linguistics: An introduction* (1962), which was translated into Japanese, German, Spanish, and Italian. Philologists still know his works on Germanic verse and alliteration. The *Reader in nineteenth century historical Indo-European linguistics* he edited (1967) continues to be used among those exploring the history of the relevant fields, and his introductions to the readings give insight into his own views on the method and theory of historical and comparative linguistics. Consistent with what he taught students, he saw his own publications as acts of scholarly communication, and it is thus fitting that many of these works have since been made available free on the website of the LRC.

Lehmann served on a number of international commissions, committees, and boards. His language expertise encompassed Arabic, Japanese, Turkish, and a host of diverse Indo-European languages in the Celtic, Germanic, Italic, Balto-Slavic, Hellenic, Anatolian, and Indo-Iranian families. He appeared in *Who's who in the world*, *Who's who in America*, and at least four other *Who's who* publications. He supervised approximately fifty Ph.D. dissertations, and mentored hundreds of students and others who worked on research projects in his various centers; a number of these, in their turn, achieved international acclaim.

The awards came in regularly. Lehmann received the highest honors given to noncitizens by India, Germany, and Denmark for his contributions to scholarship, as well as a major award given by UNESCO. He held both Fulbright and Guggenheim fellowships.

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He was given an honorary doctorate from SUNY Binghamton and in 1995 from his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin. He was one of the first professors named to be an Ashbel Smith Professor at the University of Texas in the early 1960s. In those days before endowed chairs and professorships, to be named an Ashbel Smith Professor meant not only that you were very highly regarded but that you were paid at least $25,000 annually at a time when the average full professor was making barely half that. Later, Dean Robert D. King of Liberal Arts bestowed on Lehmann the Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor in the Humanities, the first endowed post Dean King had raised the money for. The recognition that gave Win Lehmann the greatest personal satisfaction was receiving the Harry H. Ransom Award for Teaching Excellence in the Liberal Arts in 1983, three years before he retired at age seventy. He was also honored with two festschrifts (Hopper 1977 and Polomé & Justus 1999).

All this time he led a subdued life devoted to family and scholarship, driving twenty miles to the campus and back from his house on magnificent acreage overlooking Lake Travis. He and Ruth were dedicated environmentalists and donated 160 acres in far northwest Travis County to the Nature Conservancy to create the Ruth Lehmann Memorial Tract. They loved animals and always had rescued birds and animals to show off when one visited them on the lake. No party at the Lehmanns' house was complete without the spot-lighted procession of raccoons, possums, squirrels, and less recognizable Hill Country mammals that came up to feed after the sun was down. Graduate students who housesat for them were given detailed instructions for the nightly feedings.

Lehmann's interests were unusually wide. He was devoted to those impenetrable, heavy novels of James Joyce, *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's wake*. He championed the difficult prose of his friend and University of Texas colleague in philosophy, the Indian writer Raja Rao, and campaigned tirelessly to gain greater recognition for Rao. During the 1980s he participated regularly in a luncheon group meeting at the faculty club where literature mainly, but everything under the sun, was discussed. The physicist John Wheeler, an intimate of Albert Einstein's who went from Princeton to Texas before retiring, was Win's partner in this enterprise.

Win Lehmann was a very private man. Few outside his family could claim to really know him. Virtually none of his colleagues in his later years would have known that he was a skilled pianist, politically engaged, or that he and Ruth spent much of their time walking in the woods. Entertainment for its own sake was an eccentric notion to him. There cannot have been many days when Lehmann did not strike a blow on behalf of a book, an article, a book review, a new course, or a new way to secure funding for the Linguistics Research Center.

Winfred P. Lehmann was a man perfectly described by that now antique phrase 'a gentleman and a scholar'. He was decent and courtly, hard-working, encouraging of younger faculty, generous to graduate and undergraduate students with temporary problems of liquidity, always willing to yield to deans' requests to take on distasteful committee assignments, and above all unfailingly attentive to his wife and family. What the University of Texas has accomplished in linguistics, Germanic studies, Middle Eastern and South Asian studies, and the cognitive areas of psychology is Win Lehmann's legacy to the university where he spent almost sixty of the ninety years of his life.

Win would have appreciated a more literary flourish to end any account of his days and ways, preferably something from one of those Old Germanic literatures he loved. None would be more fitting than these lines, from the Old Icelandic *Hávamál* (original following Lehmann 2005:Ch. 7):

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Deyr fé, deyja frændr	Cattle die. Kin die.
deyr sjálfr hit sama;	Thou thyself shalt die.
ek veit einn at aldri deyr:	One thing I know that never dies:
dómr of dauðan hvern.	Judgment over the dead.

Our judgment of our colleague and mentor Win Lehmann is secure. He lived a good life, a good life for linguistics, for the study of language, and for the LSA, a good life for the University of Texas, a good life for scholarship, and a good life for his family and those closest to him. [ROBERT D. KING, *University of Texas at Austin*, and JOSEPH C. SALMONS, *University of Wisconsin–Madison*.]

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[1] The online versions listed here are available at http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books.

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