

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

GUIDO HUGO MARX (1871 – 1949)

Guido Hugo Marx, Emeritus Professor of Mechanical Engineering, died on September 10, 1949 at his home in Palo Alto. Professor Marx had been seriously ill in late spring, but after a remarkably good recovery he spent an active summer at his home near Fallen Leaf Lake. His sudden passing was apparently caused by a cerebral hemorrhage.

Guido Marx was born in Toledo, Ohio on March 29, 1871, a son of Joseph Eugene and Johanna Eleanora (Pulster) Marx. He obtained the degree of Mechanical Engineer at Cornell University in 1893 and began his professional career in engineering at the Gleason Works in Rochester, New York and with the Bement Miles Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In 1895 Albert William Smith, who had been Guido Marx's teacher at Cornell, selected young Guido to be his colleague at Stanford -where a new school of engineering was being developed by him and Charles David Marx, Guido's older brother. The mutual professional esteem of A. W. Smith and G. H. Marx resulted in co-authorship of an excellent treatise on Machine Design, 1905, in which emphasis on rational analysis replaced the current tendency to design by rule of thumb methods. In his earlier association with the Gleason Company, Guido Marx became intensely interested in the strength and kinematic properties of gear teeth, so that for many years research in that field engaged his enthusiastic efforts. Simultaneously with the gear problem, his interests were focused on the theory of lubrication. In this field too he and his graduate students produced valuable contributions. The undergraduate as well as the graduate student who exhibited a spark of interest in questioning design authority found a warm friend and advisor in him; intellectual honesty invariably led Guido to suggest well-designed experiments for the purpose of "asking nature herself". By disposition and training he was an excellent teacher and engineer who spoke with deep conviction about the social obligations and functions of technical people. His lectures to citizenship classes at Stanford on "Man's Cooperation with Nature" were amazingly inspiring to everyone.

He was also., throughout his life, an ardent defender of the rights and interests of oppressed or neglected minorities. These crusades revealed in him a curious moral versatility. At one moment he could speak with the deep seriousness of a Hebrew prophet; a moment later his sense of humor would suddenly recapture him. He could laugh at himself and his indignations without for a moment yielding an inch in his devotion to whatever cause he was defending.

Guido Marx's interest in public welfare began in 1908 when he concerned himself deeply with the San Francisco Graft Prosecution. About the same time he wrote an extremely well documented paper on "The Problem of the Assistant Professor" in which he pointed out by statistical methods the financial problems besetting young faculty members. In 1911 together with Professor R. L. Green, he organized the Progressive Party in this locality, and in 1912, was an official delegate to the Bull Moose Party Convention. He was also one of the Founders of the American Association of University Professors.

When Guido Marx, after 41 years of outstanding service to the University, became an emeritus professor in 1936, he was called to Washington as a member of the Third World Power Conference. As a member of the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco he was an active chairman of its Public Utilities Section from 1936-40. He was also state chairman of the American Federation of Teachers, and took an active part in the American Civil Liberties Union. When World War II demanded professional training of selected personnel, Guido Marx rejoined our faculty and taught Machine Design Courses.

Before coming to Stanford in 1895 Guido Marx married Gertrude Van Dusen, a member of the library staff at Cornell, an accomplished musician as well as a student of the classics. With his bride he built his home on Lincoln Avenue and raised a family of four children. His civic loyalty and interest in his community were well known to everyone. The death of Guido Marx is a great loss not only to his only surviving daughter, Mrs. Vernon Givan of Palo Alto, to five grandchildren and to one great grandson, but also to everyone with whom Guido Marx came in contact during his rich life as a friend, a teacher and a citizen.

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