

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**  
**ROBERT AVERILL WALKER**  
**(1914-1998)**

Professor Robert A. Walker died of a heart attack on February 3, 1998 at the age of 84. He was born on January 11, 1914 in Spokane, Washington. He studied at the University of Chicago where he received his undergraduate and doctoral degrees. His dissertation on urban planning later became a widely-used textbook in that field. At the time of his studies in Chicago -- where he met his future wife, Louise, a fellow student-- he was influenced by the ideas about liberal education of the university's President Robert Maynard Hutchins, including an emphasis on the reading of the "Great Books." After receiving his doctorate in political science, he held administrative positions in the National Resources Planning Board, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of State. Although Bob left the government for academia, he never abandoned his belief that government service could be a rewarding career or that government could play a major role in enhancing the quality of life in the United States.

His first academic position was in the political science department at Kansas State University. Bob Walker joined the faculty of Stanford in 1949 as associate professor of political science. He taught courses on public administration, and wrote or co-authored several books, including one about the governance of California in 1953. From 1958 to 1963, he served as Chairman of the Department of Political Science, greatly expanding its size and national visibility.

Bob's abilities as an administrator were recognized by the university's then President J.E. Wallace Sterling and Provost Frederick Terman. In 1952, they appointed him to the university's Committee on Land and Building Development. In this capacity he helped develop the plans for what became Stanford's Industrial Park. In the late fifties and early sixties, he also chaired the Committee on Faculty-Staff Housing, and in that capacity was instrumental in the development of the three faculty-staff subdivisions, namely Pine Hill I and II and later Frenchman's Hill.

In August 1954 President Sterling initiated the Stanford Study of Undergraduate Education, the first review of the undergraduate curriculum in 40 years. Walker was early appointed to the Study's executive committee and the following year chaired the two committees that devised a new set of courses required of all undergraduates.

Reflecting his great admiration of Robert Maynard Hutchins, Bob vigorously argued that all students should be exposed to areas of knowledge beyond their fields of concentration and that the faculty had a solemn obligation to agree upon a relatively restricted list of courses open to students in meeting the new general education requirement. His views prevailed. Thus all students, without exception, were required to take History of Western Civilization (History 10, 11, 12), giving the entire student body a common intellectual experience. His committees approached the science requirement with equal certitude, requiring that students who had not had biology in high school take three quarters of the subject at Stanford. Other requirements did offer students a greater range of choices. The new requirements were summarized on the famous "green sheet" that guided several generations of Stanford undergraduates in course selection outside their majors.

In the belief that an international perspective was an essential part of a liberal education, he developed, together with Professor Frederick Strothmann, Department of German Studies, an overseas studies program. In 1958 the first overseas study center was established in Germany near Stuttgart. In the following years centers were created also in France, Italy, Austria, England, and Spain. During Walker's tenure as Director of Overseas Studies, three out of every five undergraduates, 8000 in all, spent two quarters abroad.

Bob Walker's boundless energy and spirit of public service left a lasting imprint on the development of Stanford. He was not only a skilled administrator, but also an innovator of great vision. He played a proud part in the improvement and growth of Stanford from his arrival in 1949 to his retirement in 1976.

After he retired, Bob continued to live in his house on San Juan Hill, together with his beloved Louise and their oldest son, Robert. His was a fulfilled life which he lived out with courage, determination, joy, and purpose. He stayed in his campus house to the end, caring with deep love and compassion for Louise as she slipped into the twilight of Alzheimer's disease. Bob and Louise were a devoted partnership. They shared with each other the blessings of their unbounded love, children, many friends here and abroad, and meaningful work and participation in a community they deeply valued.

Bob's booming voice and his good humor were characteristic of his joy of life. He will be dearly missed. A memorial service for him was held in Stanford's Memorial Church on March 16, 1998. In addition to Louise and Robert, Bob is survived by a

brother, Tom, and his wife, Genevieve, of Ohio; and by two additional sons and their families: Richard and Chic Dabby of Berkeley and their daughters, Nadya Dabby and Zia; and Jerome and Lora of Los Angeles and their daughters, Sharon and Kathleen, and Kathleen's husband, Todd.

Presented to the Senate of the Academic Council on April 29, 1999

Kurt Steiner, Chair

Hubert R. Marshall

Lowell W. Price