COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

DEAN MCHENRY AWARD
FOR DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP IN THE ACADEMIC SENATE

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:
The Dean McHenry Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate is awarded every two years in conjunction with the UCSC nomination of a Senate member for the systemwide Oliver Johnson Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate. After wide consultation, COC selected William Domhoff, Professor of Psychology and Sociology, for the Dean McHenry Award and as nominee for the Oliver Johnson Award.

Professor G. William Domhoff joined the faculty of the Santa Cruz campus on the day the campus opened its doors, July 1, 1965. He was an Assistant Professor of Psychology and a Fellow of Cowell College. He retired as a Professor of Psychology and Sociology in 1994, after an extraordinary career as a builder of the campus, as a distinguished teacher and scholar, and a most effective leader of the Santa Cruz division of the Academic Senate.

In its early years, the Santa Cruz campus imposed unusual burdens on its faculty members. All the institutions of a new campus had to be invented and established, and at Santa Cruz the tasks were doubled and more, because of the college system. Each faculty member had a joint appointment in a college and a department (or “board of studies” as they were called in those days). The colleges were as demanding of a professor’s time as the departments were, and the tasks of coordinating the two systems of organization were daunting. Many of the younger faculty had a difficult time becoming established in their professions, because of the calls of campus service. Professor Domhoff did all the expected service, and was a major force in the development of both Psychology and Cowell College. At the same time, he was able to lay the foundations for an extraordinary intellectual career.

Although the Dean McHenry Award is given for Senate service, it is worth taking a short detour to review Professor Domhoff’s scholarly achievements. What is most remarkable about them is that they occurred simultaneously—and over his entire career—in two completely different fields, the psychology of dreams and political sociology. Professor Domhoff was attracted to Santa Cruz initially by his mentor, psychologist Calvin Hall, and together they pioneered a new way of understanding dreams. Prior to Hall and Domhoff, the study of dreams had been dominated by a Freudian perspective, in which dreams were understood as powerful symbols of an otherwise unreachable subconscious. Through an exhaustive content analysis of thousands upon thousands of dreams, Hall and Domhoff were able to interpret dreams as a reflection of and response to ordinary events that are easily accessible in the conscious world. Professor Domhoff’s findings and new neurocognitive theory of dreams are presented in his Finding Meaning in Dreams (1996) and The Scientific Study of Dreams (forthcoming, 2003).

Professor Domhoff is internationally known for his extensive empirical investigation of the American power structure. His classic book, Who Rules America? (first published in 1967, with subsequent editions in 1983 and 1998) opened the door to an understanding of power in the country,
as exercised by a small and interlocking elite. Subsequent books—including *The Higher Circles, The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats, The Powers That Be, Jews in the Protestant Establishment, The Power Elite and the State, Blacks in the White Establishment, State Autonomy or Class Dominance* and *Diversity in the Power Elite*—fleshed out the story, leaving us with an exceptionally full and detailed interpretation of how power is exercised.

Professor Domhoff was involved in service to the Academic Senate from his first year on the Santa Cruz campus, when he was a member of the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid. At that time, the Santa Cruz campus was the most popular in the system, relative to its size, and without a staff to carry on the work, the job fell to the Senate committee members to read and assess thousands of application files. In subsequent years he continued to serve on the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, as well as on the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Research.

He joined the Committee on Academic Personnel in 1982, and took a major Senate leadership role in 1983 when he became chairperson of that committee, a position he kept for the unusually long period of three years. Successive Committees on Committees asked him to stay on in that position because of his effective leadership. The campus had just reduced the academic role of the colleges (in 1979), and was searching for the best ways to understand, reinforce and reward the array of contributions in the areas of scholarship, service and teaching. Through his leadership of CAP, Professor Domhoff was able to help the campus establish new traditions of academic standards that have served us well. As chairperson of CAP, he was a member of the divisional Senate Advisory Committee, which advised the chair and set overall Senate policy, as well as of the University Committee on Academic Personnel.

From 1987 through 1990, Professor Domhoff served as chair of the divisional Committee on Preparatory Education, and as such he served on the universitywide committee and became its chair. He helped the University of California forge a new policy with respect to the teaching of students who had not satisfied the Subject A requirement, and that policy is still in force today.

In 1986-87, and again in 1989-90, Professor Domhoff was Vice Chair of the Santa Cruz division, a position which once again put him on the Senate Advisory Committee and made him a participant in determining overall Senate policy. He was also the campus’ representative to the Academic Assembly. He was thought of so highly by his colleagues that the Committee on Committees asked him to be Chairperson of the divisional Senate, a position he occupied from 1990 to 1992. As Senate Chair, he was chair of the Advisory Committee, member of the Academic Council, member of the Committee on Planning and Budget and Assembly Representative.

He is remembered by Senate veterans as being one of the most effective chairs we have had. His tenure was marked by many initiatives and a great deal of enthusiasm. He inspired others to contribute, in part because of his own boundless energy. One of his most important accomplishments in that period was the establishment of a very effective committee on the colleges, jointly sponsored by the Committee on Planning and Budget and the Committee on Educational Policy. Partly because of Professor Domhoff’s urging, the committee set the exemplary standard of involving almost everyone on the entire campus in its discussions. Not only did the committee come up with interesting recommendations, perhaps more importantly it succeeded in making the colleges once
again an important focal point for discussion on the campus. Professor Domhoff also helped guide the faculty through a very difficult transition between chancellors, from Robert Stevens to Karl Pister.

In the last three years, Professor Domhoff has been chair of the divisional Committee on Emeriti Relations. He has been very active in this position, helping to develop both intellectually stimulating programs for the retired faculty and policy positions for consideration by the administration.

The culmination of Professor Domhoff’s career came in 1997, when the Senate named him to the Faculty Research Lectureship. The large lecture hall was packed to overflowing with students, faculty, administrators and staff, who came to honor one of the campus’ brightest stars, a person who had touched and inspired thousands of us. He gave a brilliant speech that evening, somehow combining the study of both dreams and the power elite into a seamless whole, and was met at the end by an outpouring of applause that seemed to signify respect, gratitude for a lifetime of contributions and even love in equal measures.

Professor G. William Domhoff is one of jewels of the Santa Cruz campus: founder, inspirer, mentor, teacher, scholar—and remarkable contributor to the success of the Academic Senate. It would be conventional to say we are proud, but in fact we are humbled, to present him for the Dean McHenry Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate.

Respectfully Submitted:
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES
John Hay
Sandra Faber
John Isbister
Lincoln Taiz
Shelly Errington, Chair

April 29, 2002