**Robert Lineberry**

**Bob and I were friends and colleagues for over 40 years.**

**I knew Bob long before he came to the University of Houston.**

**We shared not only our academic lives and a long friendship, but the experience of growing old and facing the end of our professional lives.**

**When you reflect on the end of your career, it’s only natural that you engage in some soul searching about the wisdom of the most important decisions you made—the decisions that defined your life.**

**After I told Bob that I had decided to retire, we talked about our decision to become professors rather than perhaps choosing careers that might have paid better, had more influence on the world, or perhaps were a little glamorous or adventurous.**

**Both of us being world travelers and students of world events, we speculated about what life would have been like as diplomats or even diplomat-spies.**

**We all fantasize about having a different life--being famous, rich, powerful.**

**Woody Allen famously said: “My one regret in life is that I am not someone else.”**

**I told Bob that it might be interesting to be born again with a unique set of characteristics that made one perfectly programed for success and influence.**

**Perhaps a blend of Mother Theresa, Barack Obama, Warren Buffet and Steven Jobs.**

**Bob thought that sounded interesting, especially the Warren Buffet part.**

**Bob and I laughed about the careers we might have chosen, who we might have been, but decided that waking up in someone else’s skin could be perilous.**

**Neither of us wanted to find out we were Lindsay Lohan or Donald Trump.**

**Trump was definitely out because neither of us ever had any talent for making big money, and as for hair, Bob reminded me that had lost his comb over decades ago.**

**After some discussion, Bob assured me that he had no regrets about the life he chose.**

**None whatsoever!**

**No doubts of any kind!**

**No Woody Allen complex!**

**He loved being a professor and would have chosen no other career.**

**Most importantly, he loved being a teacher.**

**He had an insatiable Intellect.**

**He read widely. His intellectual interests knew no bounds.**

**One week he would be reading about Russia, France or Egypt, the next week cell biology, global warming or European health care policies.**

**He always hoped he could talk you into reading the same book or article so he could discuss it with you.**

**He had a major impact on my reading.**

**Everything he learned from literature, scholarly research, the media, the arts and his travels around the world was most valuable to him when he could share it with others.**

**Part of Bob’s education was travel.**

**He was an avid traveler and considered it to be an integral part of being an educated person.**

**He and Nita traveled much of the world.**

**When they fell in love with a country or place, they made repeated trips there.**

**I traveled with Bob in China, and with both Bob and Nita in Spain, and Australia.**

**Most of us research countries before visiting them, but not like Bob.**

**Bob researched in-depth and soaked up everything he could once he had reached his destination.**

**It was wonderful to travel with him and share information and insights about the people, cultures, histories and economies of the cities and nations we explored.**

**Everything that Bob learned, he wanted to pass on, particularly to his students.**

**He told me that he found it hard to think about retirement because he so much enjoyed helping students think about and reason through the most important issues facing themselves, our society and all of humanity.**

**Only a few days ago when he was terribly sick, Nita told me that he wanted to teach his classes because he said those hours spent with his students were so important to him.**

**I tried to get him to take his mind off his health for a while by watching America’s Funniest Videos or comedy shows or anything that would make him laugh, but Nita told me later that he said that the only thing that made him forget his problems was teaching.**

**When you measure a life, leaving behind thousands of grateful students and colleagues is an extremely high level of achievement.**

**Bob left all of us a life lesson.**

**Live your life doing something you love.**

**He lived his life doing something he truly loved.**

**Very few people are so blessed.**

**Thoreau, as we know, wisely said: “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”**

**And Oliver Wendell Holmes added: “… and they die with all their music in them.”**

**Bob did not live a life of desperation, and he did not die with the song still in him.**

**He was a virtuoso in an educational symphony, and he enriched all our lives.**

**It was a life well lived and all of us were lucky to have shared it with him.**