

Linguist Leon Dostert, GU Language Director

By Alex Ward

Washington Post Staff Writer

Leon Dostert, 67, an internationally known linguist and the first director of Georgetown University's School of Languages and Linguistics, died unexpectedly Wednesday in Bucharest, Rumania, where he was attending a conference.

Mr. Dostert was a professor emeritus of languages and linguistics at Occidental College in Los Angeles, where he lived.

A tireless and imaginative man, Mr. Dostert experimented successfully with ways to translate scientific data by mechanical means, with establishing new methods of teaching foreign languages to the blind, and with simultaneous translations of speakers at international gatherings.

Mr. Dostert, who was chief interpreter at the Nuremberg war trials, instituted simultaneous translation there.

Mr. Dostert was born in Longwy, France, and came to the United States in 1920. He attended high school in Pasadena, Calif., and later Occidental College. He transferred to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service in 1926 and received a bachelor's and a master of arts degrees.

After teaching French at



1950 Photo

LEON DOSTERT

Georgetown from 1930 to 1942, Mr. Dostert entered the Army as a major. During World War II he served as French interpreter for Gen.

Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was promoted to colonel in 1945 and assumed his duties at the war trials until 1948.

After the trials, Mr. Dostert was director of simultaneous interpretation at the United Nations, and from 1948 to 1949, was administrative counselor to the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva.

Mr. Dostert was then appointed director of the Institute of Languages and Linguistics. Under his direction, the institute pioneered in the use of integrated language laboratory instruction and set up language training centers in foreign countries.

In 1959, after becoming director of research on mechanical translation and special projects at Georgetown, Mr. Dostert worked on language programs for blind students and a literacy program in Turkey.

He returned to Occidental College in 1964 as chairman of the languages and linguistics department.

In addition to numerous military awards, Mr. Dostert was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and received two honorary doctorates.

He is survived by his wife, Bozena Henisz, a daughter, Mrs. Stephen Winter; and two sons, Pierre E. and Francois M. J. Dostert.