IN MEMORIAM / PROFESSOR ROBERT BRUCE STANTON

Submitted by Henry J Laufenberg on October 19, 2018 - 1:56pm

Associate Professor Emeritus Robert Bruce Stanton, 1925-2017

Bob Stanton retired from the English Department in 1996 after forty years of service extending back to his initial appointment here as young Instructor in 1956. Prior to that, Bob served in the Army during World War II as a surgical technician stationed in Iwo Jima; he attended the University of Kansas City where he earned both his B.A. and M.A. degrees; and then he went on to earn his Ph.D. at Indiana University. At Indiana he was awarded the Oscar Ewing Prize in Philosophy and then a prestigious John H. Edwards Fellowship, awarded every year to a small, distinguished group of graduate students selected from across the University. His doctoral dissertation on “The Significance of the Woman in Hawthorne's American Romances” anticipated what would eventually become a fundamental component of modern literary and cultural studies.

After earning his doctorate in 1953, Bob served as an Instructor at Northwestern University, and then arrived in Seattle in 1956 to begin many years of service first as an Instructor, then as Assistant Professor, and eventually as an Associate Professor in our Department. A Fullbright Lectureship for 1961-62 resulted in his teaching at the Kumamoto National University in Japan, and a second Fullbright Lectureship enabled Bob to attend the Summer Institute of American Studies in Taipei before returning to the U.S. He was awarded still another Fullbright Lectureship for 1970-71 at the University of Wurzburg in Germany.
Bob's publications included articles on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and an especially influential essay on "Hawthorne, Bunyan and the American Romance" published in the March 1956 issue of the PMLA. His interest in his students extended beyond the classroom to include devoting considerable time and energy to the development of a UW Student Bill of Rights. In appreciation, he received the ASUW Distinguished Person Award in 1977 in recognition of "his contribution to student affairs" and "his desire to help people live as humanly as possible in this troubled world."

Bob delighted in the challenge and thrill of solving and developing puzzles requiring the ability to look beyond the obvious, and in retirement he published close to two hundred logic puzzles for Games magazine. He also sang in the Seattle Opera Chorus, in the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and in the Seattle Chorale, and acted in a number of local theater productions. During the final years of his life, Bob completed a book entitled The Joy of Skepticism, which encourages logical reasoning and affirms that ethics can flourish outside religious doctrine and faith.

Bob's love of life is epitomized by fond memories of his singing Teyye's "If I Were a Rich Man" and "To Life!" with a rich bass voice at the Jewish Community Center on Mercer Island. He is survived and cherished by his wife Susie, by a wide circle of family extending through nine great-grandchildren, and by numerous friends in Seattle civic life and in the performing arts.

People Involved: Robert Stanton  Robert Abrams
News Category: Faculty and Staff

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