



Out of Iowa

The University of Iowa/Department of English--Fall 1991

Darwin Turner and AAWS

Colleagues, students, former students and friends attended the memorial service that was held on February 23 for Dr. Darwin T. Turner, who died February 11 while on leave. Dr. Turner was Chair of the African-American World Studies Program for seventeen years, during which time the Program grew from being a subdivision of the American Studies Program to a separate Program with seven faculty lines. He was a distinguished scholar in Black American Literature and was awarded the title "University of Iowa Foundation Distinguished Professor of English" in 1981.

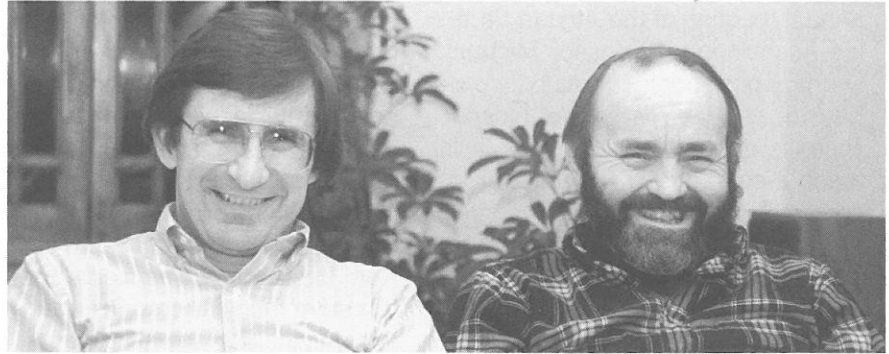
Dr. Turner served in many national organizations, including the NEH. Among other things, he was President of the Iowa Humanities Board, and served on committees for the National Council of the Teachers of English. Yet, he always had time for his students. He taught a full schedule and, in addition to his duties as Chair, served as adviser to every graduate student.

As Professor Turner would have wanted it, the AAWS program continues its activity even without his presence. Since Spring, the program has been chaired by Professor Peter Nazareth. In February he gave a presentation on the fiction of Ishmael Reed who later, as speaker for Black History month, talked to the Diversity Task Force and gave a public presentation on multiculturalism that is available to students on videotape.

After a Visiting Professorship in Spring when he taught African drama, Professor Femi Osofian, Head of the Theatre Department at Ibadan University in Nigeria and one of Nigeria's

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MOVING THE CHAIRS



Ed Folsom and John Raeburn

After serving the English Department for six years as Chair, John Raeburn has begun a slow retreat, hiding out this semester at the University's Center for Advanced Study on the rural Oakdale campus, then fleeing overseas to teach at the University of Denmark in the Spring. Professor Raeburn is resuming his long-interrupted project investigating the cultural texture of 1930s photographs. When he returns from Denmark, he will take up quarters in the American Studies offices in the Jefferson Building where he will continue his joint appointment with English. Professor Raeburn guided the department through some tough years and managed to make us stronger in every measurable way, and many immeasurable ways. Long ago, he was president of the student body at Indiana University; administration runs in his blood, and he is a master at it.

Ed Folsom, then director of the General Education Literature Program, was elected Chair last Spring. His blood grows chilly at the thought of administrative work, and he is already beginning to speak nostalgically about reading actual books. Fortunately, he does not have to go far to seek advice and comfort: there are three former Chairs nearby. John Gerber, now an emeritus professor, is as active as ever, having published three books in the past couple of years, most recently *O Marvelous Model T*—a diary of his expedition from Pittsburgh to the West Coast and back in 1928. Gerber's successor, Richard Lloyd-Jones, a recent recipient of two prestigious awards (see Faculty News, p. 5) is now on phased retirement, teaching halftime for the next two years.

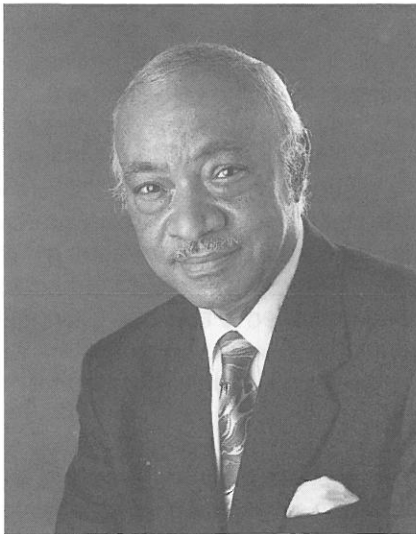
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best-known dramatists, returns this Fall to produce one of his plays at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association. Professor Michael Harris, whose book *Thomas Andrew Dorsey and the Rise of the Gospel Blues* is due out in November, will teach a course next Spring prior to coming in as an Associate Professor in History and African-American World Studies in Fall 1992.



Darwin T. Turner
1931 - 1991

New Endowed Chair

The Department of English has the opportunity to seek a distinguished senior teacher and scholar to hold the James O. Freedman Chair in Letters. Only the second fully endowed chair in the College of Liberal Arts, the Freedman Chair has been established through a generous gift of one million dollars in contributions from Grain Processing Corporation, Kent Feeds, and Americana Seeds. It honors the sixteenth President of the University of Iowa.

Lectures and Seminars

This fall, three finalists for the Freedman Chair have been invited to campus, each to give a lecture, then to direct a seminar for graduate students, and to meet and talk with students and faculty members. In September, Cary Nelson, Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences at The University of Illinois, presented a lecture entitled "Modern Poems We Have Wanted to Forget" and conducted a seminar on his recent book, *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory, 1910-1945* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

In October, Nancy Armstrong, Professor of Comparative Literature at The University of Minnesota, lectured on "The American Origins of the English Novel" and led a seminar session on her book, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

In November, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Trustees' Council of Penn Women Professor in the Humanities at The University of Pennsylvania, gave a lecture on "Subject Female: Authorizing American Identity," and discussed her book, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (A. A. Knopf, 1985) in a seminar session.

Dudley Andrew, Joan Benson, Huston Diehl, Ed Folsom, and Susan Lohafer, members of the Search Committee, hope to make a recommendation to the English faculty and to the Dean of Liberal Arts by the beginning of the Spring semester, 1992. We in the department feel fortunate, of course, in being able to anticipate adding to our faculty a new senior colleague of such distinction as each of these candidates would bring.

IN MEMORY OF

T. ANNE CLEARY

CHRISTOPH K. GOERTZ

DWIGHT R. NICHOLSON

LINHUA SHAN

ROBERT ALAN SMITH

AND IN SUPPORT OF
MIYA SONYA SIOSON

FROM THE EDITOR

Six years ago, Professor John Raeburn, then beginning his first term as chair of our department, initiated a fundraising effort that was most timely and gave us some help that we badly needed. In so doing, he mentioned starting a newsletter from our department, but the daily circumstances of administering our work soon undermined that desire, and so things have stood for six years. In his initial letter to our alumni, however, Raeburn offered a year's subscription to *The Iowa Review* to those who gave \$35 or more. If I remember correctly, we got sixty-five new subscriptions that year, and so it is not only for altruistic reasons that I have offered to begin a newsletter at last and to try to revive our department's campaign.

The contributions many of you made six years ago and that some of you have renewed from year to year since have made a lot of difference in our daily lives, particularly in an era in which much more than the amenities have been stripped from our support. We have purchased two lap computers for the use of students and faculty, especially on research trips to distant libraries. We have refurbished the Crawford lounge for graduate students and have each year, for the last five years, given out four \$250 dissertation research travel awards. Prairie Lights Bookstore of Iowa City, we are happy to add, has made two such awards themselves each of the last two years.

Your contributions have also made possible two \$250 awards in the names of John C. Gerber and W. R. Irwin for outstanding teachers in the General Education Program. You also funded, partially, a two-part symposium on 19th Century Literature and Culture last year.

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State of the Department

Ed Folsom, Chair

Just a few years ago, any one of us in the department might have begun a new term by walking into our classroom on the opening day of the semester, finding ten or more students hovering at the door and hoping to add the class, and thinking to ourselves: "Wow! I must be a fine teacher; everyone seems bent on entering my class." But within a few semesters that same teacher would have noticed that everyone up and down the hall was facing the same requests, that our students were legion and desperate, that they had little choice but to besiege each of us.

The sheer numbers are stunning: this year we have 935 active undergraduate English majors (only ten years ago, there were 380) and 300 graduate students (20% more doctoral students than a decade ago). In the English Department's General Education Literature Program, we teach nearly 6,000 undergraduate non-majors each year. The University enrollment has declined over the past two years, but the pressures on the department's enrollments continue to increase (250% over the decade!). What is truly sobering is that we are doing what we are doing with thirteen fewer faculty members than we had a decade ago (59 then, 46 now), and nearly ten fewer full-time positions than we had only six years ago. There have been severe cuts across the university, but our department has been hit the hardest.

The department, then, is doing far more with far fewer resources. That's commendable, but it has taken its toll: our class sizes are increasing to levels that are not conducive to the kind of quality instruction we have prided ourselves on, and our faculty are exhausted. Everyone is noticing how little time there is to develop the kind of collegiality that has traditionally characterized this department. With five more colleagues retiring next year (see "On the Move"), the diminishment continues—an overall loss, over a decade, of nearly 25% of our staff. We are now the smallest English Department in the Big Ten, yet we have the second-largest number of majors.

Meanwhile we manage to publish six scholarly and/or creative journals. Our faculty continue to win the most prestigious awards in the profession (including, just this year, two Guggenheims, an NEH fellowship, an NEH research award, and a MacArthur Foundation award), as well as major teaching awards (six faculty members in the last few years have won University-wide awards for excellence in instruction). They play an active and prominent part in all forms of scholarly exchange: in just the last six years, they have authored or edited 42 books, nearly 250 articles or chapters, and a hundred book and film reviews, while delivering 184 papers at national conferences.

Our graduates manage to get good jobs; all fourteen PhD recipients last year are employed in colleges and universities, teaching in their field of preparation. Our Teaching Assistants year after year win far more University-wide

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(From the Editor)

Your donations have gone towards funding the Glick Awards, which enhance faculty developmental leaves by paying a modest amount (\$500 per faculty member) to cover research and travel expenses, and they help support an array of awards for our best undergraduate scholars and writers. Finally, and most impressively, you have made possible an \$8-10,000 dissertation fellowship each of the last two years. The first of these fellowships went to Jocelyn Bartkevicius, the second to Ben Moore.

For this and other assistance you have offered, we in the Department of English are very grateful. Our society seems to be engaged in a redefinition of a university so that its expertise and learning are increasingly matched to commercial activities in a now-triumphant capitalistic system and so that the "excellence" of a university is correspondingly defined as the amount of money it or a sub-unit brings in.

Our administrators argue for state support on the grounds that for every dollar of state money invested in the university three more (or more) are brought in. It should come as no surprise that departments in the humanities are gravely disadvantaged in such a system, that the processes of reallocation should favor medicine, the sciences, business, law, athletics, and the like, and that as we write, no true turn of events is foreseen.

Under these conditions, especially, amenities such as you have provided are worth much more than their dollar amount to our communal morale and well being. Clearly we do not have an endowment that would make the expenditures mentioned

above possible out of annual income; they are dependent on a certain amount of annual giving instead. And we will be very grateful to any of you who can contribute. Should you be able and willing to do so, please use the form at the bottom of page 5.

As for *The Iowa Review*, the tax laws have also changed in the last six years and we can no longer make a gift of it as we once did. Unless your gift is very large indeed, the amount that covers a subscription will not be tax deductible. Therefore we cannot make the same offer as before. We can only remind you that the *Review*, one of the very best literary magazines around, is available at \$15/one year, \$27/two years, \$40/three years, or \$100 through the end of the century. The *Review* comes out three times a year, with around 200 pages per issue of essays, stories, poems, and reviews. A fair sprinkling of its contents are by our alumni. In the last two years alone, seventeen items from our pages have gone on to win a Best American or Pushcart or some such award.

As you may guess, we too need more readers if we are to survive, and if there is a more natural readership for it than the alumni of our department, that would be hard to discover. The form on page 5 can double as an order form. For faster service, call 1-800-235-2665 to charge your subscription orders to Visa or Mastercard.

Finally, if you have any news about yourself or other alumni from our department, please let us know. We intend to issue one *Out of Iowa* each Spring and Fall semester and in future newsletters, we will—space permitting—pass on what you send.

We'd like to remind you that gifts to the UI Foundation, the University of Iowa's preferred channel for private support, qualify as charitable contributions to an IRC Sec. 501 (c) (3) public charity for federal income, estate and gift tax purposes.

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(State of the Department)

teaching awards than any other department on campus. Our General Education Literature Program won a Ford Foundation Grant to lead the way in curricular responses to issues of multicultural diversity.

So, paradoxically, we find ourselves simultaneously at a zenith (more awards for scholarship and teaching than ever before, more competitive admissions to our graduate programs than ever, increased national prominence) and a nadir. We are working with the College administration to build our numbers at least back to what they were when we were dealing with only a third of the current number of students. We are proud of what we have built at Iowa, and we worry about how quickly it could all come down.

If you are at MLA in
San Francisco:

Please

stop by the Iowa
Suite

Le Meridien Hotel

on Saturday

December 28,

from 6-7:30pm

(host: Ed Folsom)

Continued from p. 5.

1990 and Tony Lattes for the fall semester this year. In exchange, John Harper taught at Montpellier last fall, while Jon Wilcox will do so next spring.

By a similar exchange with The University of Copenhagen, Florence Boos taught there a year ago while the year before, Niels (Nick) Bugge Hensen spent a year, mostly teaching Shakespeare, with us. In his first year since stepping down as Chair, John Raeburn will spend next Spring teaching in Copenhagen, while Cay Dollerup will spend the semester with us.

Travelling even farther, Carol de St. Victor spent the whole of last year teaching in Malaysia, and at least some of it writing colorful letters home. You may look for some of her travel essays later this year in *The Iowa Review*, from which, in turn, David Hamilton will soon be on leave as a Senior Fulbright Lecturer, this spring, in Spain.

In October 1989, the Association of Graduate Students in English held the Third Annual Conference in English Studies at the Iowa Memorial Union after a year of planning in which nearly all active AGSE members played a part. Entitled "Representing Culture: Text, Society, and Discourse," the conference attracted well over one hundred papers and two hundred participants from various disciplines and from colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. All attending agreed that the conference was the best ever.

Highlights included a keynote address by James Raymond (then editor of *College English*), readings by James Tate and Meg Wollitzer, and a job search workshop with panelists from local schools. Graduate students also moderated roundtable discussions on such topics as "Theory and Practice in Text and Culture," "Teaching Undergraduates at the University," and "Rethinking

AGSE

Disciplines and Boundaries in Graduate Studies." Social events featured an "open bar" party followed by a dancing expedition for the inexhaustible, and a potluck dinner hosted by UI graduate students.

Last year AGSE co-sponsored a talk by Charles Altieri from the University of Washington. Brought here on a Ford Foundation Grant for Cultural Diversity, Professor Altieri spoke on diversity and the pedagogy of General Education literature classes. The AGSE Committee for Scholarly Exchange recently organized its first meeting, where three graduate students presented their papers to a large and appreciative audience.

AGSE now has voting members on most department committees. AGSE participation has already resulted in changes and clarifications in the Ph.D. requirements and M.A. exam, the creation of a committee to aid students in their job searches, and opportunities for students to propose seminar topics.

Out of Iowa

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