



IN MEMORIAM

Edmond Masson
Professor of French, Emeritus
Santa Barbara
1907 — 2001

Edmond Masson, known as Eddy to his colleagues, passed away on December 29, 2001, at the age of 94. He joined the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages at UCSB in 1948 as a lecturer in both French and Russian. He retired in 1975 as a professor of French.

Eddy was born in Moscow on July 28, 1907. His father was a civil engineer of French ancestry and his mother, a Parisian. Eddy never knew his father, who died when he was but two years old. His mother supported the family by becoming a French tutor in the homes of Russian nobility. Growing up in this environment, Eddy became thoroughly bi-lingual and bi-cultural. He retained a childhood memory of crossing Red Square every day on his way to school. Eddy's brother, a member of the White Guards, was killed after the 1917 Revolution, and Eddy and his mother escaped by walking across the border into Finland in the dead of winter. They were eventually repatriated to France, then came to this country in 1921 when Eddy was 14 years old. Although he knew no English when he arrived, two years later he won a prize for poetry written in English, an early sign of his remarkable linguistic aptitude. An amateur philologist, Eddy knew Latin, Greek, Polish, and Spanish, in addition to his native French and Russian.

After completing a B.A. and an M.A. at Stanford, Eddy taught briefly at San Bernardino Junior College, then at Scripps College, before joining the faculty of Mills College. His ten years at Mills were interrupted by World War II. During the war, his considerable linguistic skills were put to service first in the Office of War Information, and later in the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs at the State Department, where he worked as a radio announcer, writer, and administrative officer. Following the war, he returned to the academy, teaching for one year at the University of Oregon, then one year at Berkeley, before settling at UCSB in 1948.

He completed his Ph.D. in French at UCB in 1950, focusing on nineteenth-century French criticism of Russian literature. At that time, the Santa Barbara campus was a small undergraduate liberal arts college. From the beginning, Eddy willingly and actively participated in campus life, establishing a pattern of generous institutional service that was to continue throughout his career. In 1957, although he was an assistant professor, he was asked to become chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. This was a period of very rapid growth at UCSB. Eddy established the German major, secured a budget for Classics, and facilitated the appointment of nine ladder-ranking colleagues, most of whom were to go on to long and distinguished careers at UCSB. Following his term as chair, Eddy was able to devote more time to language teaching, which he truly loved, especially of Russian. He built up a Russian minor at UCSB, became president of the California chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Russian and Eastern European Languages, ran a Russian summer workshop for the State Department of Education, served on a Universitywide commission on foreign language teaching and on the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language of the California State Department of Education. In 1965-66, the Department of French and Italian was established out of the old Department of Foreign Languages, and Eddy became its first chair. He

continued in that post for four years, overseeing additional faculty appointments and the growing of the Ph.D. program in French (which was established in 1965).

Eddy met his wife, Roberta Tempest, when they were both students at Stanford. They were married in 1933. In addition to his wife, Eddy is survived by three children: Michel T. Masson (a professor at Santa Barbara City College), Robert T. Masson (a professor at Cornell University), and Constance Ferrer.

William J. Ashby