



## IN MEMORIAM

John Henry Raleigh  
Professor of English, Emeritus  
Berkeley  
1920 — 2001

John Henry (universally "Jack") Raleigh was one of the last survivors at the University of California, Berkeley, of an English department it is rare to find at leading American universities today, one in which the study of English and American literature still held a primary place. He came to Berkeley as a lecturer in 1947, joining a department with one woman professor (the poet Josephine Miles, who was to remain the only woman for two decades), and spent 10 years — as one did in those days — turning his Princeton Ph.D. dissertation on "Matthew Arnold and American Culture" into a splendid book. (He would rather have written on James Joyce, but his superiors regarded Arnold as a wiser choice.) He headed the faculty team that devised the sophomore survey course, a course that he himself taught for more than 40 years.

Once tenured in 1955, he concentrated his attention as a teacher and scholar first on the novel — English, American and European — as a genre; and secondly, on the Irishness that had been a major part of his own cultural heritage as a good Catholic boy growing up in Springfield, Massachusetts. He regularly taught senior seminars in Joyce, Lawrence and Melville. Without ever signing on to The New Historicism— or any of the new modes in literary study, for that matter — he remained fascinated by the intersection of fictional narratives with real history, and had the nerve to try to revive interest in historical novels (like Sir Walter Scott's) in the 1960s. In 1966, he edited the Riverside Press edition of Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*. In "Literature and History" (one of his favorite lecture courses), he had students read forgotten works like H. F. M. Prescott's *The Man on a Donkey*, a 750- page novel set in England during the Reformation. In his idiosyncratic lecture course, "The Novel in Western Civilization," Professor Raleigh challenged undergraduates to read long novels by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Melville, Mann and Joyce, as well as two-sevenths of Proust. *Time, Place and Idea: Essays on the Novel* (1968) brings together several of the critical essays he wrote for *Partisan Review* and other publications. He won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1961 and gave his department's Charles Mills Gayley Lecture (on "Tolstoy and the Uses of History") in 1966.

Joyce's *Ulysses* proved the ideal text for him to indulge his parallel fascinations for narrative, history and Ireland, both in the classroom and in print. In this area, his most notable published contribution was a painstakingly extracted chronology of the lives of the novel's immortal couple, published by UC Press in 1977 as *The Chronicle of Leopold and Molly Bloom: Ulysses as Narrative*. Closer to home, he grew fascinated by the playwright Eugene O'Neill, whose New England Irish- American roots in some ways resembled his own. For 25 years, with both Jack Raleigh and Travis Bogard (originally of English, then chair of the Department of Dramatic Art) teaching and writing about O'Neill, UC Berkeley was a productive fountain of O'Neill studies. Raleigh's major contributions were a critical study of 1965 (*The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*), along with a collection of critical essays on *The Iceman Cometh* that he edited in 1968. He wrote copiously and lectured widely (in both the United States and Europe) on both Joyce and O'Neill.

Jack Raleigh, who received his B.A. from Wesleyan University in 1943, married Jo Podson of Arkansas, whom he met when she was a student at Berkeley. Jo was as much an Anglophile as Jack was a Celt, and they relished their energetic sabbaticals and vacations on both sides of the Irish Sea, as well as on the Mendocino coast of California. They eventually moved into a wonderful old- fashioned "professor's house" on Keeler Avenue in the Berkeley hills; a double set of book- lined stairs led down from the entrance to the two- story

living room overlooking the garden and bay view, where guests could enjoy Jack's good whiskey in Jo's Waterford crystal, and the many stories they both had to tell. Jo suddenly died just three weeks before Jack, after having cared patiently for him — they shared lunch and conversation every day at his retirement home in Oakland — in the years of his physical decline, which began around 1997. A week before he died, he was reading (with the aid of a magnifying glass) Roy Jenkins's new biography of Churchill.

One of the old-guard faculty cultivated by people like Bob Sproul and Ben Lehman, Jack remained indefatigably, almost uncritically, devoted to Berkeley, even during times of storm and stress. Having served as vice chair of the Department of English from 1959 to 1962, he was chosen for chair in 1969; but at the same time incoming Chancellor Roger Heyns asked him to serve as vice chancellor for academic affairs, so he shifted his energies to campus administration for three years — years of continuing student protests and severe budget cuts. He demonstrated his thoughtfulness and good judgment many times over, and during difficult times he exhibited his wonderful sense of humor. The position of vice chancellor for academic affairs was eliminated when Chancellor Bowker introduced the two-provost system. Jack chaired the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, Committee on Committees and the Graduate Council of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, as well as the statewide versions of the latter two.

A Faculty Club stalwart and hearty singer-pianist, he performed in a number of the club's Christmas shows. He followed Berkeley sports with interest, and played squash at Harmon Gym every morning he was in Berkeley for 34 years, mostly with Marvin Friedman, a professor of psychology at San Francisco State University, and he walked to and from his home or office. One former faculty squash partner remembers that "he played with tremendous concentration, making up for an all-around lack of finesse with sheer willpower." Another states that "the rewarding aspect of playing squash with Jack was the talk about books, politics, literature, and the campus before, between, and after games."

Although he once vowed never to retire, ("What could be better than this?" he asked) he did, in fact, become professor emeritus in 1991, at 70, receiving the Berkeley Citation on his retirement, and finally gave up his daily squash game five years later. He leaves three children, Lydia Berggren of Salt Lake City, Kingsley Ashford of Paradise, California, and John L. Raleigh of Redwood City, California, as well as seven grandchildren.

In this time of specialists and careerists, we might not see the likes of Jack again. He was an old-fashioned virtuoso who, while doing every kind of work in a university, did it quietly, not calling attention to himself, but with distinction. Finally, not the least of his admirable qualities was his great capacity for friendship. He had many friends and even regarded this big impersonal university as a friend. We were all fortunate that he did.

Watson M. Laetsch  
Ira Michael Heyman  
David Littlejohn  
Errol Mauchlan  
Robert Middlekauff