



IN MEMORIAM

Donald J. Ward
Professor of German and Folklore, Emeritus
Los Angeles
1930 — 2004

Don Ward died on September 16, 2004 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Mary Louise Ward, his son James of Sherman Oaks, and his daughter Natalie Thomas and her two sons in Edwards, California.

Born on March 16, 1930 in Petaluma, California, Don attended high school and junior college in Santa Rosa. He received his bachelor's degree in 1959 from San Francisco State University. His studies had been interrupted by his service in the United States Air Force (1950-1954) in which he served as a cryptographer. At this time his interest in German culture had been firmly established. After his discharge, he therefore remained in Germany to study at the University of Mainz (1954-1956). After receiving his B.A. degree, he began his graduate work at UCLA where he received both a master's degree and a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages (1965) as one of the students of UCLA's eminent folklorist, the late Wayland D. Hand.

His academic career began with an appointment as instructor at UCR (1963-1965). In 1965 he became a faculty member at UCLA where he remained until his retirement in 1991. His international recognition as a folklorist brought him a number of appointments as visiting professor. In 1969-1971, concurrent with his appointment as associate director of the UC Study Center there, he taught at the University of Göttingen, Germany. During a sabbatical leave in 1991 he was asked to teach a seminar as visiting professor of folklore at the University of Freiburg, Germany. After his retirement in 1991, he held several appointments as visiting professor at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. Recognition came in the form of a number of prestigious fellowships. An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship took him to Freiburg i. Br., Germany in 1971/72, a Fulbright Research Fellowship did the same in 1985/86. His book *The Divine Twins: An Indo-European Myth in Germanic Tradition* (Berkeley 1968) received a Second Place Award of the Chicago Folklore Prize and his translation and edition of *The German Legends of the Brothers Grimm* (2 vols., Philadelphia 1981) was named by Choice one of the best scholarly books of 1981.

Don did not shy away from administrative work. Apart from serving as associate director of the UC Study Center in Göttingen, he was acting director of the UCLA Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology (1974-1978).

His engagement with folklore led him to positions in appropriate professional organizations. He was elected vice-president of the California Folklore Society at a plenary session in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1964. In 1978 he was elected as a member of the Commission to Study Current Trends and Theories in Folk Narrative Research by the members of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, a membership that was renewed in 1992. In 1981 he had become a Lifetime Fellow of the American Folklore Society and he was chosen a "Folklore Fellow" by the Finnish Academy of Sciences, Helsinki, Finland. After the death of his teacher, Wayland D. Hand, in 1986, he became the editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia of American Popular Belief and Superstitions* (1986 ff.). He served as associate editor of *Abstracts in Folklore Studies* (1965-1978), as associate editor of *Fabula: Journal for Folk Narrative Research* (1974ff.) and, with J.F. Nagy,

as associate editor of *Western Folklore* (1994ff.). His contributions to narrative research have appeared in the most prestigious international journals and handbooks, such as the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*.

As is obvious from this review of his scholarly career, Don was an American scholar who at the same time was a member of the international scholarly community. Even after his retirement he went on teaching and traveling abroad, keeping up his contact with his many students and friends in Germany and Austria. His teaching and administrative work in Göttingen, Freiburg i.Br., and Innsbruck have contributed not only to his own international reputation, but also to that of the Folklore Program at UCLA.

Don lives on in the memory of his many students and friends as a man with a genuine sense of humor combined with a sharp intellect, which made it an utter pleasure to spend time with him. His colleagues remember him on the one hand drawing caricatures during faculty meetings, and on the other hand interjecting well- thought- out ideas which were testimony to his keen thinking and his penetrating mind. His humor found expression in his command of the pun, which he practiced in his native English as well as in German. He was a sunny person who was friendly to everyone. He was a lover of life, who loved to party, to fish and to play golf. But he also worked hard, a brilliant scholar who has made major contributions to his field of specialization: Germanic Folklore.

Hardly anyone else in his department had as many Ph.D. candidates as Don, altogether over 20. This was not only the result of his professional competence and ability to stimulate research, but also of his personal kindness and his dealing with his students on an equal level. He provided them with good advice, not only regarding their scholarly endeavors, but also in personal respects, often influencing the direction of their lives. He was definitely NOT an academic in an ivory tower but a true human being and enduring friend to many.

His humor and ability to turn colleagues and students into friends for life have doubtlessly had a lasting impact. He will live on in our memory as a humorous, caring and intellectually challenging colleague and friend.

Hans Wagener