



IN MEMORIAM

Hugo Rodríguez- Alcalá
Professor of Spanish, Emeritus
UC Riverside
1917 – 2007

Hugo Rodríguez- Alcalá was born in Asunción, Paraguay on November 25, 1917 and died in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 2007, days short of his 90th birthday. He was a professor of Spanish at UCR from 1963 until his retirement in 1982.

Rodríguez- Alcalá emigrated to the United States in 1947, having received his undergraduate education and his J.D. degree in Asunción. He earned his M.A. from Washington State University in 1949 and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1953. Prior to his appointment at UCR he taught at Washington State, Rutgers, and the University of Washington. He also held visiting appointments at Princeton and Columbia Universities. Upon retiring he returned to Paraguay, where his intellectual activities continued unabated: he founded the Club Centenario and a Short Story Literary Workshop and held the important position of president of the Paraguayan Academy of the Spanish Language from 1989 to 1994.

Hugo came to UCR as a full professor, already well known and highly regarded in the field of Latin American literature. While at UCR he served as founding chair of the department of Spanish and was instrumental in establishing its M.A. and Ph.D. programs. He also founded the Hispanic Commemorative Series, published at UCR, and served as its editor- in- chief. Between 1972 and 1974 he was director of the Education Abroad Program in Mexico. He served on the editorial board of numerous professional journals, among them *Hispanic Review*, *Revista Iberoamericana*, *Hispanic Journal*, *Letras de Buenos Aires*, and others.

A man of wide- ranging intellectual interests, he focused his research efforts most prominently on modern Hispanic American narrative. His monographic treatments of Juan Rulfo (1965) and Ricardo Güiraldes (1986) are noteworthy in that vein, as is his *Narrativa hispanoamericana* (1970). He also wrote a history of the literature of his native Paraguay, published in 1970, and contributed many other monographic treatments and collections of literary essays as well as numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals. At UCR he was accorded the Academic Senate's highest recognition for his scholarship when he was named Faculty Research Lecturer in 1969.

Hugo was also a prolific (and precocious) creative writer. By his own account, he was writing poetry at age 5 and continued to do so for the rest of his life, publishing many collections such as *El canto del aljibe* (1973), *El portón invisible* (1983), *Terror bajo la luna* (1983), and *Romancero. Tierra adentro* (1999), for which he received the National Literature Award. He also cultivated the brief narrative, publishing (among other titles) *Relatos del norte y del sur* (1983) and *El ojo del bosque: historia de gente varia* (1985). In 1996 he was awarded the Gabriela Mistral Medal by the government of Chile in recognition for his contributions to literature and the arts. He is included along with Elvio Romero, Josefina Plá, Hérib Campos Cervera, Oscar Ferreiro and Augusto Roa Bastos as part of the Paraguayan Generation of '40, characterized by its quest for literary innovation in poetry and narrative.

Casual acquaintances seldom failed to be impressed by Hugo's flair (some would say flamboyance) and his joie de vivre. Never a shrinking violet, he could be counted upon to enliven any gathering with his wit and

scintillating conversation. Those who knew him better, though, were well aware that his light- hearted attitude masked the self- discipline and exemplary work habits of the serious scholar.

Hugo is survived by his widow, the writer María Luisa Moreno, and five children by previous marriages. It was an honor and a privilege to have had him as a faculty member at UCR.

William W. Megenney
Philip O. Gericke