

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JOHN ORMSBY LYONS (1927-2003)

John O. Lyons, professor emeritus of English, joined the English Department in 1960, after having taught briefly at Bowdoin and Dartmouth. He received his B.A. from Kenyon College in 1951, his M.A. from Columbia University in 1952, and his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 1960.

After coming to Madison, he taught at the University of Baghdad (1964-1965) and the University of Tehran (1970-1972) on Fulbright-Hays Fellowships. Before entering Kenyon, he served in both the U.S. Army and the Coast Guard.

He specialized in modern American literature, publishing The College Novel in America in 1962, which he updated to 1974 in an article in Critique. With Karl Kroeber, he co-edited Studying Poetry: A Critical Anthology of English and American Poems (1965). He also wrote The Invention of the Self: The Hinge of Consciousness in the Eighteenth Century (1978), a book that draws on Rousseau, Sterne, Goethe, Casanova, pornography, and travel literature. The range of authors and topics in that book illuminates the breadth of Professor Lyons' interest and expertise, expressed best in the courses he taught. Not many specialists in modern literature could also teach undergraduate courses on Milton and on the nineteenth century Romantics. His introductory courses awakened freshmen to Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility, Byron's Don Juan, Thoreau's Walden, and Conrad's Heart of Darkness, to take a sample of one of his syllabuses. His graduate students and colleagues could ask him about the entirely obscure Eden Phillpotts, Oliver Onions, about the best translation of The 1001 Nights, about Terry Southern, Paul Bowles, James Baldwin, Peter DeVries, and Nabokov, as well as Europeans from Cervantes to Günter Grass. He directed over 30 dissertations. In addition to literature courses, John Lyons also taught creative writing, and he taught Integrated Liberal Studies courses from 1961 to 1975.

He served the department in a number of capacities, notably as the director of the Graduate Division and of Graduate Placement in the mid-1980s.

Afflicted by Parkinson's disease, Professor Lyons retired in 1993. He is survived by his wife Mimi, five sons and daughters, and numerous grandchildren.

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