

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS NORMAN P. SACKS

The world of Hispanic letters suffered a significant loss with the death of Norman P. Sacks, professor emeritus of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Professor Sacks died August 5, 2004, at the age of 90, in Pasadena, California, where he made his home for the final three years of his life. He was an energetic, generous human being who had a remarkable intellect and a delightful sense of humor. He will be fondly remembered as an excellent professor, Hispanist and humanist. His formal career spanned an impressive forty-eight years, but he pursued intellectual endeavors far beyond retirement, remaining active well into his eighties.

Professor Sacks's teaching career began in the Philadelphia public schools where he taught Latin and French. After completing his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also served as a teaching assistant in Spanish and French, his career as a professor of Spanish and Portuguese led him to positions in Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Ohio and finally, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he spent 23 years until his retirement, in 1984. In the golden years of "post-retirement" when many look forward to a more leisurely pace, he complemented prior visiting professorships with a semester at Brigham Young University in 1985, a semester as the Andrew Mellon Professor at the University of Pittsburgh in 1987, and again, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in 1990.

Professor Sacks's pedagogy was confined neither to the classroom nor the academic year. He originated and taught in the Summer Intensive Spanish Program on this campus, and applied Spanish and French linguistics at NDEA institutes for secondary school teachers. In addition to teaching Spanish, French, Portuguese and Latin, Professor Sacks taught almost all aspects of Spanish linguistics, Peninsular and Latin American culture and courses in the Ibero-American Studies Program, which he also directed. In 1993 and 1996, he taught courses on the state of contemporary English at an Elderhostel in our community.

Professor Sacks's interest in the teaching profession led him to publish several textbooks including the beginning Spanish text (*Spanish for Beginners* published in 1957), a collection of short stories (*Cuentos de ayer y hoy*, published in 1956), and the widely acclaimed *Modern Spanish* (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1960). A major project of the Modern Language Association (MLA), this last text embodied all the best teaching practices of the times and was written by a team of authors, including Sacks and five other leading scholars.

Professor Sacks's long list of publications reflects the breadth of his myriad interests. He published articles on the teaching profession, on Spanish and Portuguese linguistics, and applied and contrastive linguistics. His publications on Latin American and Peninsular culture demonstrate his particular interest about intellectuals and essayists. He received grants from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and the American Philosophical Society as well as a Fulbright-Hays fellowship, all of which afforded him the opportunity to study in libraries in Latin America, Spain and Great Britain. The fruit of his research was a series of articles on such thinkers and philosophers as José Victoriano Lastarria and Salvador de Madariaga, about whom Sacks was an acknowledged expert. Throughout the various stages of his career, he prepared and published a series of essays and books about important writers and philosophers of the modern age, including Lastarria, de Madariaga, George Orwell, Andrés Bello, Antonio de Nebrija and others.

A tireless reviewer, Professor Sacks published a total of 34 reviews in *Hispania*, *Hispanic Review*, *Romance Philology*, *Language*, and *Modern Language Journal*. He was a critic-reader of manuscripts for several presses, a referee for journal articles, and served on the editorial board of *Hispanic Linguistics*.

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Professor Sacks was affiliated with many professional organizations and served as a member or chair of countless committees. He was a founding member of many of those organizations and a life member of most. The myriad of awards and honors he received throughout his career, notable among them the Certificate of Award he received from the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) in 1978, is a testimony to his continued efforts on behalf of the profession. Ever the dedicated professional, he continued to attend conferences and conventions as often as possible long after retirement.

Norman Sacks, the human being, was a charming, generous person with an unfailing sense of humor. In classes his knowledge was encyclopedic. As a teacher he was always available to discuss concerns, problems, the state of the world, or the weather. He will be greatly missed by a profession that he served long and faithfully.

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