

Phillip Harth (1926-2020) in Memoriam

Phillip Harth died peacefully on April 28, 2020 at the Attic Angel Community in Middleton. Phil received his M. A. from the University of Chicago in 1949, and his Ph. D., with Honors, in 1958. R. S. Crane was one of his mentors. From 1954 to 1956 Harth was a Fulbright Scholar at University College, London, and spent much of his time at the old North Library of the British Museum. That concentrated effort nurtured his doctoral dissertation, earned his position at Northwestern University (1956-1965) and evolved into his first book, the still invaluable *Swift and Anglican Raitionalism. The Religious Background of 'A Tale of a Tub'* (Chicago, 1961). The importance of his book was made plain in 1966 when the University of Wisconsin English Department tempted him to Madison to replace the retiring and distinguished Ricardo Quintana. Harth's appointment assured Wisconsin's enduring importance as a center for the study and teaching of eighteenth-century British literature and culture.

Phil's subsequent books were *Contexts of Dryden's Thought* (Chicago, 1968), and *Pen for a Party. Dryden's Tory Propaganda and its Contexts* (Princeton, 1993), and an edition of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (Penguin, 1989). Harth made plain that religion and politics are necessary to understand ancestral achievement. This uniformly admirable body of research, together with numerous articles and reviews, was supported by major grants: the Guggenheim Foundation, ACLS, the Clark Library, the Wisconsin Institute for Research in the Humanities, the Reed College Humanities Institute, the University of Virginia as visiting professor, and the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin. In 1977 Philip Harth was named the Merritt Hughes Professor of English and a permanent member of the Institute for Research in the Humanities. He also served for a year as Interim Director of the Institute, and for three years as Chair of the English Department.

In 1999 the university's William Freeman Vilas Trust supported a major dinner and conference in honor of Harth's seventy-fifth birthday. The consequent festschrift was *Eighteenth-Century Contexts. Historical Inquiries in Honor of Philip Harth* (Wisconsin, 2001). The subtitle reflected Harth's scholarly mode of proceeding: inquire into contexts the better to understand texts. His festschrift has been called "an enduring work" (James Engell, Harvard University) and "a tribute to the high quality of Phillip Harth's publications" (W. A. Speck, Northumbria). Each term reflects the shared opinions of specialists in scholarly method, and in Dryden, Swift, and their broader cultures.

The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Department of English honors his memory and his extended and extensive contribution to its distinction.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Weinbrot