

## In Memoriam

### JESS STEIN

Jess Stein, Editor In Chief Emeritus of the Random House Dictionaries, died suddenly and peacefully at home on June 23rd, 1984. It was his seventieth birthday.

He was born in New York City and grew up in Detroit, Michigan, where he graduated from Wayne State University. Jess did his graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he began his dictionary work under Sir William Craigie and contributed to the *Dictionary of American English*. In the late 1930's, he worked with E. L. Thorndike and Clarence L. Barnhart on the Scott Foresman series of school dictionaries. After serving with the Office of Censorship in World War II, Jess came to New York and worked with Barnhart at Random House on the *American College Dictionary*, which was first published in 1947. He later became a vice president at Random House and the Editor In Chief of its Reference Department, where he was responsible for *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language—the Unabridged Edition*, *The Random House College Dictionary*, and a series of popular vest-pocket dictionaries and reference books, including five bilingual dictionaries and a rhyming dictionary. He also served as the Editorial Director of *The Random House Encyclopedia*, was the author of the *Random House Speller-Divider*, and had just finished work as co-editor on *The Random House Thesaurus*.

In addition to his dictionary and reference-book work as a major executive of Random House, Jess had been instrumental in forming the company's College Textbook Department, and had contributed to many other of its publishing divisions. He signed up and was the first editor of Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans*. Other authors with whom he worked and whose books he published included Bergen Evans (*The Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*), Thomas Pyles (*Words and Ways of American English*), and Dr. Franz Alexander (*The Western Mind in Transition*).

Jess had been a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of American Publishers as well as its Treasurer. He also held advisory roles with the Department of State, the International Read-

ing Association, and the University of Massachusetts Press, among others.

Although he retired in 1980 and became Editor In Chief Emeritus of the Random House Reference Department, he remained active as a writer and editor of reference books and as a consultant to the publishing house he had served for almost forty years.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; a son, Eric, of San Francisco; a daughter, Regina Wilson; and a granddaughter, Laurel Wilson. The funeral services held in White Plains, New York on June 26th, were attended by over two hundred people including many publishing colleagues, lexicographers, and linguists. Eulogies were given by Robert Bernstein, president of Random House, Anthony Schulte, executive vice-president, Leonore Hauck, and Stuart Flexner.

During his long and successful career, Jess shared his knowledge, experience, humor, and friendship with many. He will be sadly missed.

Stuart B. Flexner

Random House, Inc.