

In Memoriam

Kelsie Brown Harder

Born on August 23, 1922, on a large farm on Cedar Creek in Perry County, Pope, Tennessee, he was the son of Prince William and Ollie Belle MaGee Harder, and grandson of Confederate Captain William Henry Harder, who was present at the surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox in 1865.

He is survived by his wife, Louise Marcia Maron Harder, Potsdam, his sister Elsie Carrie Boyd, Linden, Tennessee; his children, Kelsie Terry of Reno, Nevada; Gerald William of Hanford, California; Dennis Prince of Norwood, New York; Frank Maron of Hammond, New York; Ann Leslie Bedell of Newton, New Jersey; and Marcia Louise Harder of Washington, DC, and several grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, his brother Elvis Earl Harder of Linden, Tennessee, and his son Thomas Brown Harder of Potsdam. He was married to Louise Marcia Maron in Chester, West Virginia, on October 9, 1960. Previous marriages ended in divorce.

He was graduated from Cedar Creek Junior High School in 1937 and Perry County High School, Linden, Tennessee, in 1939 and from Dickinson Business Institute, Nashville, Tennessee, the same year and was employed as a Cost Clerk by Englert Engineering Company, Nashville. In 1942 he was employed by the U.S. War Department, Milan Ordnance Depot, Milan, Tennessee. In 1943, he was selected to attend the War Department's Senior Clerk School, Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois, and was then transferred to Sierra Ordnance Depot, Herlong, California, as Chief Teletype Operator and Director of the Message Center.

In 1944 he entered the U.S. Army at the Presidio of Monterey, California, and was stationed at Camp Abbot, Bend, Oregon, and later at North Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington. He was qualified as an Expert Rifleman, a Personnel Technician, and was

discharged in 1946 as a Technical Sergeant and Sergeant Major of the 73rd Engineer Replacement Battalion, 11th Engineer Group, North Fort Lewis, Washington. He received the Army Commendation Medal for his service. He returned to Sierra Ordnance Depot as a Cost Accountant and then as Acting Administrative Assistant in the Post Engineers.

In 1947 he resigned his position with the War Department to enter Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1950, magna cum laude, majoring in English, with minors in Philosophy and Spanish. After receiving a graduate English scholarship, he earned the degree of Master of Arts in 1951, with a major in English and a minor in History. During the summers while in college he was self-employed as a timber contractor. In 1954 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Florida, majoring in English with a minor in Linguistics. On the basis of his academic achievement, he was invited to become a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi, the two major honorary societies in the United States. He was also elected to Eta Sigma Phi, the honorary societies in the United States. He was also elected to Eta Sigma Phi, the honorary fraternity in the study of Greek and the Classics; and Sigma Delta Pi, the national honorary Spanish society.

In 1954 he joined the faculty at Youngstown University as an assistant professor and was promoted in 1960 to professor of English. He taught courses in Philosophy, English, Humanities, and Business Administration. He began publishing academic articles while a student at the University of Florida, and continued to publish widely in American speech, literature, folklore, dialect, and onomastics (the study of name origins and their linguistic backgrounds). At Youngstown University he served as Chair of the Honors Committee and taught in the Honors Seminar. He founded and served as adviser of the literary magazine, co-founded the Academic Honors Society. In 1961-62, he was President of the Ohio Folklore Society. From 1959 to 1961, he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Northeastern Ohio College English Group.

In 1962, he was awarded a Fulbright Lectureship to teach American Literature and linguistics in India at the Universities of Punjab and Kurukshetra. While in India, he also lectured for the United States Information Service throughout the country; and with his wife Louise and his two sons, drove a 4-cylinder Ambassador car over the Himalayas into Kashmir. On their return to the United States, in 1963 they continued on around the world, visiting Hong Kong, Manila, Thailand, Singapore, Okinawa, Taiwan, and Japan, where they climbed Mount Fuji.

In 1955 he was invited by the members of the Youngstown Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon, a national social fraternity, to be their counselor. He served in this capacity until 1964, and then accepted an appointment as governor of the New York District. In 2001 he was active in initiating a chapter of the fraternity at Clarkson University, Potsdam, New York, and served as first chair of the Board of Governors for the fraternity.

In 1964 he accepted the position of Professor of English and Chair of the English and Drama Department at SUNY College at Potsdam until he taught his last class in 1996. He received the President's Award for Scholarship and Creative Endeavor in 1994. In 1989, he was promoted to SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and was also selected for the prestigious SUNY Best Faculty Fellowship Program which also allowed him to visit and teach in the August Martin High School in inner-city New York.

Soon after his arrival in Potsdam, his biography was listed in Who's Who in America and was later listed in several national and international biographies, including Who's Who in the East, Who's Who in Education, and Who's Who in the World. He held many academic positions, including two separate terms on the advisory board of American Speech, Executive Secretary-Treasurer and later President of the American Name Society, Primary Reader for SUNY Awards Committee, Consultant on NDEA Program for the United States Department of Education in Washington, Liaison Officer of New York State Education English Institute, Director of the Place Name Survey of the United States, Member of Board of Directors of the American Society of Geolinguistics, Editor of Names magazine,

Member of the Executive Committee of the International Linguistics Society, Chair of the Usage Committee of the American Dialect Society, Consultant on Dictionary of American Regional English and provided more than 6,000 entries, Consultant on the proper names in all editions of the Random House Dictionary, and Member of the International Committee on Onomastic Sciences. In 1990, he gave the keynote address at the Library of Congress on the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

He was often invited by television and radio producers to comment on some aspect of personal and geographic names. He appeared on CNN television at the Trade Center in New York City, on Morning Exchange in Cleveland, On WXYZ (Kelley & Co.), Detroit, and on numerous radio programs.

In 1967 he attended and participated in the Xth International Congress of Linguistics, Bucharest, Romania, reading a paper, "Linguistics and American Onomastics," and chairing the international meeting on onomastics. In 1972 he was awarded his second Fulbright Professorship to teach American literature and linguistics at the University of Lodz, Poland. His daughter Ann was born there in 1972. In 1978 he attended and participated in the 13th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Jagallion University, Krakow, Poland, presenting a paper, "Onomastic Devices in Literature, with Emphasis on Works by Thomas Pyncheon."

Active in SUNY academic affairs, he was chair of the Faculty Assembly of Potsdam College and was instrumental in instituting a new general education program. He also chaired the Conference of SUNY Campus Governance Leaders and later became the first chair of the new Governance Committee of the SUNY Senate. He also served on and chaired SUNY evaluating committees.

He was active in community work, serving as President of the St. Lawrence Historical Association when the Silas Wright House in Canton was purchased. As a member of the Bicentennial Committee in 1976, he delivered speeches and participated in flag presentations. As a member of St. Mary's Church in Potsdam he twice chaired the Religious Education Committee; served as Lay Chair of the Pastoral Council; as a lector, and as Eucharistic

minister. He chaired the Adult Education Committee which initiated the popular Sunday at Ten program that featured outstanding religious denominational leaders in the Potsdam community. He managed several successful Little League teams while his sons were growing up and was active in Boy Scouts at the time.

He was the author of approximately one thousand academic articles, reviews, notes, poems, books, chapters in books, and introduction to books. His interest in language is seen in his contributions to "The Dictionary of American Regional English" and "Random House Dictionary." Among his books are "Dictionary of Place Names: United States and Canada" (listed by the American Library Association as one of the major research books published in 1976), "Style and Meaning in the Works of Sir Thomas Urquhart," "John Crowe Ransom: Poet, Economist, Critic," "Baby Names," "Ultimate Name Book," "Names and Their Varieties," and in collaboration "Claims to Name: Toponyms of St. Lawrence County" and "Oxford Dictionary of American Proverbs" (also cited as a major research work).

Besides his recognition as a distinguished teacher of literature and linguistics, he was an outstanding teacher of writing, many of his students becoming major writers, including &. Coraghessan Boyle, Jack DeBellis, Frank Polite, Anthony Zappia, Mark Tursi, Peter Cooners, Derek Baznett, Anthony Leuzzi, and others. He was also active in modern literacy circles, including initiating the Star Lake Writing Workshops, which attracted Krishna Vaid, James Dickey, Anais Nin, Paul Engle, Vance Bourjaily, and other noted writers as participants. In 1995 he chaired and directed the three-day conference on modern fiction held at SUNY Potsdam in honor of T. Coraghessan Boyle, a leading American short story writer and novelist, who had been one of his students. The conference attracted leading literary figures to the campus, among them George Plimpton and the great novelist John Barth.

After his retirement, he and his wife Louise traveled extensively, including to Turkey, the Scandinavian countries, St. Petersburg, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, China, Tibet, Fiji Islands, Bali, Australia, and New Zealand. Although he collected several

172 • NAMES 55:2 (June 2007)

thousand books, he was not a book collector. He read them. He was an eclectic person with interests in all learning, but always claimed that his one hobby was the study and teaching of language and literature.

Edward Callary