John Donne Journal

STUDIES IN THE AGE OF DONNE



John Donne Journal

Studies in the Age of Donne

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In Memoriam EDWARD SICHI, JR. 1941-1990

Edward Sichi, Jr., one of the founding members of the John Donne Society and its first secretary-treasurer, died on March 7, 1990.

Ed was awarded the baccalaureate degree at California State College, California, Pennsylvania, the master's degree at West Virginia University, and the doctorate at Duquesne University after having completed a disseration that comparatively analyzed the *Roman de la rose* and *Paradise Lost*. From 1969 until his death, he taught at the Pennsylvania State University, McKeesport Campus.

Despite heavy teaching assignments and a steady diet of lower-division courses, Ed was an active scholar. He published in the various journals, contributed to volumes of essays, and co-edited *Milton's Legacy in the Arts* (Penn State Press, 1988). He regularly presented papers at international and national conferences, such as the MLA, the first two international Milton Symposia, the International Conference on Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies at Villanova University, the International Medieval Congress at Western Michigan University, and the American Association for Italian Studies. From June 17-July 26, 1985, Ed was an NEH Fellow at the Summer Institute on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Arizona State University.

From 1982 until his death, Ed was a Contributing Editor for the commentary on the Songs and Sonets for The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne. To highlight his commitment to the endeavor, Ed planned, acquired funds for, and hosted a conference of all nine editors at work on the Songs and Sonets. The conference was held at McKeesport Campus of Penn State University from March 17-20, 1983.

As secretary-treasurer of the John Donne Society, Ed was responsible for much of the administrative detail at the annual conference in Gulfport, where he collected payments from the conferees for their lodging, meals, and society dues. Periodically, Ed would escape the administrative routine in order to canvass the local antique shops between Bay St. Louis and Biloxi, for he was

an inveterate antiquary. Rarely did he depart without having bought something with which to decorate his home: brass candlesticks, a paperweight, or Christmas tree ornaments.

In Monogahela, Pennsylvania, where he lived, Ed was an appraiser of antiques. His reputation was so widespread that he once appeared on national television. Much of his involvement in the local community centered on the preservation of historical sites.

Ed did not attend the fifth annual conference (February 1990) of the John Donne Society because he was suffering from liver failure. Only days before the conference, he received a transplant. When I departed Pittsburgh for the conference, the forecast for his recovery was positive. To bolster Ed's spirits, conferees signed an enormous get-well card. I returned home before the conference ended, chiefly to visit with Ed. On the morning of February 25th, I visited him at the hospital. I told him the highlights of the conference and explained that he would receive the get-well card shortly. Two days after our conversation, he lapsed into unconsciousness and eventually succumbed.

Ed is buried on a hilltop in Belle Vernon Cemetery. His grave is marked with a black marble headstone on which is inscribed, "One short sleep past, we wake eternally." Even after death, Ed continues to admire and believe the poet and priest called John Donne.

Albert C. Labriola

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