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Tributes to Stan Schab

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TRIBUTES TO STAN SCHAB

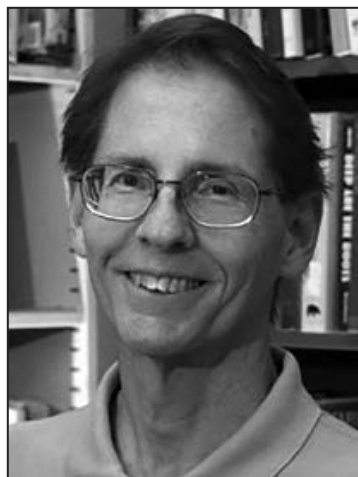
CRAIG HOWES

With the possible exceptions of my wife and son, I have spent more time with Stan Schab than any other human being. He became the one full-time employee of the Center for Biographical Research at almost the same time that I became editor of *Biography*, in 1994, and after I became Director of the Center in 1997, we occupied the same office space for the next nineteen years. I therefore have some sense of what he has meant to *Biography*, and to the field of life writing.

Though listed over the years as Assistant, Associate, and then Managing Editor, what Stan has actually done for *Biography* is everything. He and I worked on eighty-eight issues together, and as we rethought and revamped every aspect of the journal, Stan was the one who implemented and then maintained that work, sometimes for decades.

We became very proactive in seeking books for review; Stan routinely checked all the press catalogs, and requested copies before the publication dates. We changed the cover, the typeface, and all the formatting; Stan turned our decisions into templates. We became far more engaged with copyediting and proofreading; in time, Stan became the principal editor, and also the institutional memory for our house rules. And when the journal began to appear on Project Muse, Stan worked with the University of Hawai'i Press to make sure that our camera-ready copies were online-ready as well.

Above all, when we decided that the Annual Bibliography of Works about Life Writing needed to be far more comprehensive, once our search procedures were in place, Stan throughout the years steadily assembled the list of books, edited collections, special issues, individual articles, and dissertations



This image of Stan Schab accompanies the announcement for the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Service, which he received in 2007.

that would make up the bibliography, annotating each entry on the go. For this reason, I can say with some confidence that Stan knows the field of life writing better than anyone.

Stan was no less indispensable as the Center increased its activities and public outreach. When we upgraded the publicity for the Brown Bag Biography lecture series, Stan designed the flyers and sent out the notices each week. When we began producing television documentaries, Stan kept track of the funds, and worked with the coproducers and the contractors. We published eight books and edited collections through the Biography Monograph series. Stan first edited each manuscript, and then designed and prepared the camera-ready copies that went to the press. And as more and more scholars came to visit the Center—whether individually, or as participants in our special-issue symposia or in the IABA International Conference in 2008—Stan was the housing manager, flight advisor, principal scheduler, and fiscal officer.

Stan has the remarkable ability to work with almost anyone. He has been the point person for hundreds of authors and reviewers, the stabilizing certainty in the office that all four coeditors of *Biography* have depended upon, and an admired mentor for the editorial assistants we have employed over the years.

My wife often says to me, “Stan is a saint. You are not.” Stan is not a saint. He is however one of the most talented, dedicated, and fundamentally decent people I have ever known. I cannot imagine what my career would have been like without Stan’s constant support; in many important ways he has made it possible. There is no way that I can express what I owe to him, and I claim the right to say this for the field of life writing as well.

And one more thing—Stan hates these kinds of tributes, or being publicly thanked for anything. He did not know we planned this, but in this one instance, we will ignore his wishes. Thank you, Stan.

CYNTHIA G. FRANKLIN

It is impossible not to admire and respect Stan Schab, *Biography* journal’s Managing Editor from 1994–2016. It is almost equally impossible to acknowledge Stan’s extraordinary contributions formally, or to deliver thanks to Stan in any group or public setting. On more than one occasion, before sending *Biography* off to press, Stan has excised his name from authors’ and

editors' acknowledgments. At *Biography* symposia where contributors to special issues converge in Honolulu and workshop their papers, we are accustomed to thanking Stan in his absence for being the god of *Biography*—the unseen force who secures hotel and airline reservations, makes lunches appear, copyedits, obtains permissions, proofreads, problem-solves on matters ranging from visa troubles to missing manuscripts, lends his unerring eye to design and layout, and suggests brilliant and imaginative ways to strengthen the content of special issues. Stan also has been known to use his preternatural powers to make a rare exit from the office when sensing that a birthday party is coming his way.

Now that I have this opportunity to thank Stan publicly, it is difficult to do him justice for his years of steady work done with understated brilliance. My first experience working with Stan was when guest editing, with Laura Lyons, a 2004 special *Biography* issue, "Personal Effects: The Testimonial Uses of Life Writing." Laura and I badgered Stan for many things. We particularly desired that the cover image of Claudia Bernardi's artwork be in color—something that had not before been done. Stan responded in a noncommittal way to our insistent petitioning; he told us the expense would make this a hard sell to the press. His fulfillment of our wish came in the form of a subordinate clause responding to yet another of our expense-incurring pleas—"Because the cover will run in color. . . ." In a way that I have come to know as characteristic, Stan here buried his accomplishment in the very syntax of his sentences. (And we learned nothing from Stan himself of the work that went into capturing the pigments in Bernardi's painting—we came to know of his expertise only when Bernardi wrote a note of appreciation.) Stan's response also gave the barest hint of something I was to come to appreciate highly: Stan has a dry and often delightfully wicked sense of humor.

I have been coediting *Biography* since 2006, and it is difficult to imagine *Biography* without Stan. Although Stan retired in October 2016, it remains difficult to imagine. He continues to work as we move offices. He is overseeing the organizing and preserving of the journal's—and the Center for Biographical Research's—archives as only he can. Stan is himself a repository of all the knowledge, vision, and know-how that has gone into the making of *Biography*. And even as our staff will continue to rely upon all Stan has put, quite literally, into place, we will keenly miss the daily pleasures of his good company. It is a privilege, and I hope one that is not too painful for Stan, to be able to thank him here for being the moving and immovable force behind *Biography* journal, and for being a true friend and colleague whom we will continue to treasure.

JOHN DAVID ZUERN

Long before I joined the editorial team at *Biography*, from my vantage point as a faculty member in the UHM English department, I knew that Stan Schab played an essential role in keeping the journal and the Center for Biographical Research up and running. The admirable grace and dexterity with which he performed that role became even more apparent to me when I served as a guest editor for a 2003 special issue, and when I came on board as a coeditor in 2012, my admiration quickly gave way to awe. Stan's breathtaking efficiency, his stealth sense of humor, and his generosity of spirit have made working at *Biography* a privilege and a joy.

Among his many talents, Stan's tact is the one that most stands out for me. Over the years he has wielded it masterfully to coax tardy authors (and editors) into action, to secure permissions from far-flung archives and publishers, to coordinate travel and lodging for dozens of visitors to the Center, and to navigate the bureaucratic maze of a large public university. But the subtlest and most enduring evidence of his tact lies in the quality of the prose in every issue of *Biography*. Stan's judicious editing, his sense of when to bend or break the rules to serve the integrity of the ideas, has tuned our contributors' writing to fit the journal's style while retaining their own distinctive authorial voices. He is not only a scrupulous copyeditor and proofreader; his unparalleled knowledge of the field of life writing studies makes him an insightful colleague whose suggestions quietly deepen and enrich the work that moves across his desk. Keeping almost entirely out of sight, Stan has helped everyone associated with *Biography* look their best.

I am profoundly grateful to Stan for his efforts during these past months to ensure a smooth transition to a new Managing Editor—the eminently able Anjoli Roy—and to a new office space. He leaves *Biography* and the Center on a solid footing and, even more valuable, he leaves us the legacy of his good will and his light yet mighty editorial touch.

LEIGH GILMORE

Stan and *Biography*, *Biography* and Stan. For me, the two are inseparable in my happy memory and experience of publishing in the journal. I went back through my email correspondence with Stan to refresh my memory of his pithy turns of phrase and wry commentary on the ins and outs of managing a scholarly journal, but surely our relationship began on paper and involved letters flown across the Pacific, sent and received in that earlier temporality of correspondence. Although Stan and I were always located at a distance from each other, his voice springs from correspondence like a friend in the room, a friend with a wealth of knowledge about academic publishing, which he generously shared. From Stan I learned about “academic bundling” and how “Layman Poupard Press” is actually “Cengage Publishing,” which used to be Gale, and how much we could expect them to pony up for the articles they happily harvested from *Biography*. Here’s Stan on the intricacies of one such transaction: “Well, wonders never cease. Last fall we gave Gale/Cengage permission to reprint your ‘Agency without Mastery’ article, with a fee of \$200—and they actually sent us \$200. Of course, they incorrectly made the check out to *Biography* instead of to you, but what the heck—so, we will deposit Gale’s check and will send you a check from our account, which you should get next week.” Stan also mentored me on translation: “We got a request to publish a Polish translation of your ‘Limit-Cases’ article. I’m guessing we would have no control over the quality of the translation, since despite my paternal grandparents from Cracow I know about ten words of Polish.” I knew fewer and it all came out fine. As far as we both know.

Thank you, Stan, for skillfully guiding my words into print, for mentoring me, and for holding the center of *Biography* in your capable hands.

SIDONIE SMITH

Over the decades, I have come to see Stan Schab, otherwise known in messages as “Biographical Research,” as a gracious and generous collaborator, central to the ensemble of people involved in helping me communicate my work to others in the field of life writing. A true intellectual partner to humanities

scholars, he has worked with contributors to advance and ensure the highest quality of published essays and special issues of *Biography*. Stan stands out as an exemplary model, with his unfailing integrity of response, passionate commitment to every issue, impeccable editing of contributions, resolute timeliness of response to interlocutors, and persistent attention to the timeliness of publication. In his correspondence, he always added the bit of non-business, as in this opening to a message to me about my essay for the special issue on “Autobiography and Posthumanism”: “Happy ‘Leap Year’ Day, and I hope things are going well.” And he would sign off with the important message of appreciation, as in that same message: “Many thanks for the contribution, and I look forward to seeing ‘Reading the Posthuman Backward: Mary Rowlandson’s Doubled Witnessing’ in *Biography*.” It is our time now to say “thank you, Stan” for your distinguished contribution to the careers of life writing scholars and to the field of life writing itself.

GILLIAN WHITLOCK

It is widely recognized that *Biography* has a formidable diplomatic corps: Craig, Cindy, John, Miriam, Laura. These are the hunters and gatherers, to be found at conferences and seminars across the regions of IABA, always on the lookout to encourage good ideas, themes, issues, reviews. For some time now, we have been able to read about trends and ideas emerging across the field of life narrative by tracking the reception of this groundbreaking journal.

As soon as it comes to the word and the page, the cover and the layout, you connect to the producer: Stan. It was strange to meet Stan in person in Honolulu in 2008, at the sixth IABA conference, and again in 2011, for the seminar that created the special issue “(Post)Human Lives.” I already knew him so well as a friend and a fixer, from my experience as a writer and co-editor for the journal.

Stan is essential to crafting the final product. You don’t register with Editorial Manager software to get to Stan. You don’t need a password. He is present when you need him once it gets to the serious business of creating the issue, from snout to tail: the aesthetics of the cover, the order of the essays, the slow labor of the introduction, the fine detail of each essay from abstract to

bibliography. Stan coaxes and encourages, and he has enabled our very best work.

In 2012 the Council of Editors of Learned Journals awarded “(Post)Human Lives” the prize for best special issue of that year. This public recognition of the excellence of the journal on page and screen is a tribute to Stan, that quiet achiever and treasured colleague.

AIKO YAMASHIRO

Dear Stan,

Thank you for supporting *The Value of Hawai‘i* when it was such a tender green shoot, and I was such a scared gardener. Under your protection and encouragement, I always felt safe enough to be courageous. You gave me quiet ground to stand on, and helped my voice to grow more sure of itself. In editing, you showed me how to pay loving attention to each moment of punctuation.

In organizing the Brown Bag Series, you taught me how surprising and delightful gathering people can be. I learned so much about living a dedicated life from you, in daily walks, in four-legged friends, in the patience to watch someone’s story bloom slowly over time.

mahalo nui a me ke aloha,
Aiko

ANJOLI ROY

Dear Stan,

When I joined the *Biography* team last fall as a full-time staffer, I started writing a manual almost immediately. I knew that if I was going to have even the vaguest chance of succeeding at filling your immense shoes, I was going to

need a stack of reference notes to help me. As of this writing, months after your official retirement in October, that document is nearly fifty pages long and contains everything from the journal's stance on commas to your words of wisdom on how to approach UH's circuitous fiscal systems (one of my favorites is "Fiscal stuff. It's more emotional than logical").

Dear Stan, you are a masterful teacher. From my first day, you parceled off tasks and job responsibilities with a real sense of balance between what I needed to know and what would overwhelm any sane person. You answered my million questions with the patience and grace of someone who not only knows what this place needs to flourish—from when to order replacement fluorescent bulbs (at the start of each semester) to where the proverbial bodies are buried—but could also anticipate the needs of someone brand new who's come to relieve you of your responsibilities.

Dear Stan, I'm so grateful for the invaluable months, formal and informal, that we overlapped at the Center. And still, it was difficult when your last real day in the office did come. It was when I came back to work after a long weekend this January, when I managed to forget my keys to the office, that I found yours on my desk. "It seems that even on your last day, you've anticipated what I would need," I wrote to you almost immediately.

Thank you for your guidance, past and ongoing, Stan. It's an impossible task, living up to your legacy, but I hope that one day, likely many years from now, I'll be able to shepherd someone else as they step into this position as comfortably and as capably as you did.

Anjoli