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Kenneth L. Rehg, Joel Bradshaw

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In Memoriam, Byron W. Bender, 1929–2020

Kenneth L. Rehg and Joel Bradshaw

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA

1. PROLOGUE. Byron W. Bender, who died on 4 January 2020, was a major figure in advancing the study of the languages of Oceania. He served as the editor of *Oceanic Linguistics (OL)* for fifteen years and as Chair of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) for twenty-six years. His primary research interests throughout his career were the documentation of Marshallese and the comparative study of Micronesian languages. What follows is a brief account of his life and his many accomplishments. It is a story of a life well lived.

2. EARLY LIFE: 1929–53. Byron Wilbur Bender was born on 14 August 1929 to a Mennonite family in Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania. As a boy, he enjoyed farmwork and dreamed of someday becoming a farmer, as his younger brother did. In later years, he remembered this time with nostalgia, as a time when he learned much about life, nature, and work itself.

However, Byron’s life soon led him toward other fields. When he was ten years old, his parents moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where his father became treasurer for the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and both parents helped host missionaries on furlough. For his last two years of high school, they sent him to Hesston College and Bible School in Kansas. After graduating, he joined an all-Mennonite crew of “seagoing cowboys” aboard the liberty ship *S.S. Stephen R. Mallory* in the summer of 1946 to deliver horses to war-devastated Poland under the auspices of the Brethren Service Committee (Miller 2006). It was Byron’s first overseas adventure. He enjoyed it and began thinking of a career at sea. But his father suggested he try a year of college first (Bender n.d.).

He enrolled in nearby Mennonite-affiliated Goshen College in 1946, where he met his future wife, Lois Marie Graber, whom he credits with encouraging him to be a more serious student. They took German together and became study partners and close friends. Byron displayed an aptitude for languages and graduated in 1949 with a major in English. He then went on to Indiana University (IU), where he discovered the field of linguistics, in which he acquired an MA in 1950, the same year he married Lois.

She joined him in Bloomington, Indiana, where Byron was one of the initial cohort of PhD students in the linguistics program, established by Fred W. Householder, C. F. Voegelin, and other early luminaries of the new field. During that time, IU hosted two Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Institutes in 1952 and 1953. His primary mentor at IU was Fred Householder, who later chaired his dissertation and strongly backed his application for a position at the University of Hawai'i. In 1997, Byron authored Householder's obituary in *Language*.

3. MARSHALL ISLANDS: 1953–59. After completing his course work at IU in 1953, Byron was presented with an unusual employment opportunity in what was then known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), a militarily strategic area that encompassed all of the islands of geographic Micronesia except those of the Republic of Kiribati and Nauru. As the first linguist to be hired by the TTPI Department of Education, Byron's assignment was to do linguistic research in support of the development of a bilingual education curriculum for the elementary schools. The forward-looking Director of Education at that time, Robert E. Gibson, believed that the most effective approach to educating the children of Micronesia would be to teach them first in their own language and then later introduce English.

Byron and Lois first went to Fort Ruger in Honolulu, which then served as the headquarters and staging area for the TTPI. Lois obtained a secretarial job there and, because no housing was yet available in the Marshalls, she remained in Honolulu while Byron went on to Majuro, the District Center and seat of government of the Marshall Islands. However, barely a month after he arrived, his position and many others were eliminated in across-the-board budget cuts by the Eisenhower administration.

Providentially, one of the teachers slated for the Marshalls decided to cancel his contract due to lack of housing, and Byron was offered the option of staying on in that position. He accepted, and Lois soon joined him there. The prospect of living in another culture and learning another language was an opportunity that fit well with his training in linguistics and anthropology. Furthermore, he was no longer responsible for carrying out the duties for which he was originally hired—the writing of dictionaries and grammars for all the languages of the TTPI. This, of course, was an impossible undertaking. Although it was less clear at the time, we now know that at least twenty languages are spoken in this region, depending upon how one draws the boundary between language and dialect.

Life as a teacher in the Marshall Islands in the early 1950s was challenging. Housing, running water, electricity, and even food were not to be taken for granted. The education system, too, was in its early formative stage. Initially, Byron was assigned to teach at the high school but found that his students were many grades behind their U.S. counterparts. He also discovered that being a teacher at that time, in that place, required considerable flexibility. He taught school, trained teachers, ran a print shop, and even conducted a

course in celestial navigation, learning as he went. As one might expect of a linguist, he also invested considerable effort in analyzing Marshallese and in learning to speak it. In addition, he developed an interest in toponymy, the study of place names, and gathered data that later served as the basis for his PhD dissertation.

For Byron, this period of his life marked the beginning of a lifelong love affair with the Marshall Islands, the Marshallese, and more generally with Micronesia as a whole. Consequently, after completing his first two-year contract, he signed on for two more. During this time, he assumed ever widening responsibilities in the TTPI educational system, culminating in his role from February to May 1959 as the Acting Director of Education for the Trust Territory as a whole. It was during this initial stay in Micronesia that the first three of the Bender children were born—Susan, who is now a retired attorney in Honolulu, Sarah, who is a professor of German and linguistics at the University of Iowa, and Catherine, who is a physician in Kailua.

4. GOSHEN COLLEGE: 1960–62. In 1960, Byron joined the faculty of Goshen College, where he had done his undergraduate work. He was hired there as an assistant professor of linguistics and anthropology, but he described himself during this period as being a “utility infielder,” teaching courses in anthropology, freshman composition, and others as needed. While in Goshen, the last two of the Bender children were born—Judy, now a biochemist at Brown University, and John, who is a page designer and copyeditor for the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*.

While teaching there, Byron completed his doctoral dissertation, *A Linguistic Analysis of the Place-names of the Marshall Islands*. In 1963, he was awarded a PhD in linguistics with a minor in anthropology by IU. A list of Marshallese place names is provided on the Marshallese–English Online Dictionary website (<http://www.trussel2.com/mod/index.htm>).

5. RETURN TO MICRONESIA: 1962–64. After two years at Goshen, Byron discovered, as he put it, that some of the sand from the islands was still between his toes. He consequently resigned from the college in 1962 and returned to Micronesia, this time to Saipan, to work again with Robert E. Gibson, who was grooming Byron to take over as the TTPI Director of Education after his retirement. Byron was officially hired as the English Language Supervisor for the TTPI, which provided him with an opportunity to travel widely throughout Micronesia. However, after two years, he and Lois decided that they wanted their children to have a somewhat more conventional American upbringing than was possible living in a district center in Micronesia. Fortunately, a position at UHM opened up at this time in its newly established department of linguistics. The primary research responsibility of the department was to study the languages of the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia, especially those that belonged to the

Austronesian language family. Byron's work on Marshallese was a fit with that focus, he applied, and the position was offered to him.

6. UHM YEARS: 1964–99. Byron's initial appointment at UHM was as an associate professor in the English Language Institute, which at that time was placed under the responsibility of the Department of Linguistics. The following year, Byron joined the core linguistics faculty and was awarded tenure in 1969.

6.1. DEPARTMENT CHAIR (1969–95). The leadership skills that Robert E. Gibson had observed in Byron did not go unnoticed by his colleagues in linguistics. In fact, during the same year that he was awarded tenure, he became chair of the department. Byron served in this position for a remarkable twenty-six years, finally stepping down in 1995. George Grace (2001:5) observed that "his fairness and his administrative abilities were such that we faculty members found it easiest just to get on with our work and let Byron handle things." Andrew Pawley (2002) commented that Byron openly admitted that "he quite liked aspects of administration, especially those which helped students and staff, and he did it very well, very fairly, and with a wonderful gentle touch and a characteristic understated good humour. He . . . became I am sure the best-liked and most respected chair of any department of linguistics in the USA." Although administrative duties occupied a great deal of Byron's time, he never neglected his responsibilities in the three areas used to evaluate faculty—research, teaching, and service.

6.2. RESEARCH. Byron's primary research interest throughout his life was the documentation of Marshallese and the comparative study of Micronesian languages. Discussed here are a few of his early efforts that laid the foundation for his ongoing descriptive work on Marshallese and that led to the development of the field of Micronesian linguistics. A more general, but selected, bibliography of his publications is included at the end of this memorial. A longer list (through 2013) is provided on his homepage at <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~bender/>.

An opportunity for Byron to put his expertise in Marshallese and language teaching to good use arose in 1966, when the U.S. Peace Corps began recruiting and training volunteers to serve in the TTPI. Two groups were trained in back-to-back programs conducted on Moloka'i, a small island in the state of Hawai'i. The language-training component of these programs, carried out under the direction of UHM's Department of Linguistics, involved a substantial number of challenges, not the least of which was the fact that few linguistic resources existed for any of these languages. There were few dictionaries, fewer grammars, and no pedagogical materials of any kind. Consequently, texts to teach the languages of this region had to be written by the linguists working with these programs. Byron wrote the textbook for Marshallese, entitled *Spoken Marshallese: An intensive course with grammatical notes and glossary*, which was later published in 1969 by the University of Hawai'i Press. This book

served for many years as the go-to source of information about Marshallese grammar. It remains in print.

Byron was also at work in the late 1960s on trying to understand the complexities of Marshallese phonology. Especially problematic were the vowels. Byron had initially analyzed Marshallese as having twelve vowel phonemes, distinguished on the basis of four heights and three degrees of advancement. In his 1968 paper, entitled *Marshallese phonology*, he revisits this claim and argues there that Marshallese has, in fact, nineteen consonants and three semi-consonants, but just three vowels. He demonstrated that the three degrees of advancement that vowels exhibit phonetically can be predicted by adjacent consonants and semiconsonants, which are of three types—palatalized, velarized, and rounded. The fourth vowel height, he argued, could be eliminated on the basis of morphophonemic alternations.

Given that many languages of the Pacific, including Proto-Oceanic, have straightforward five-vowel systems, Byron's analysis was unsurprisingly greeted with some skepticism. It seemed to make Marshallese more closely resemble a language like Kabardian than other Oceanic languages. George Grace, who was the editor of *OL* at that time, commented that his first reaction “was to think that it looked like an exemplary instance of the kind of analysis for which Byron's mentor, Fred Householder, had coined the name ‘hocus-pocus linguistics.’” However, after giving the paper further consideration, he changed his mind, noting (Grace 2001:8) that Byron “led the reader through the evolution of his analysis, laying out for each successive modification the newly recognized evidence that had determined it. It was not so much an argument for a particular analysis as an explanation of his reasoning, and I could find no basis for questioning any of it.” Byron's analysis has withstood the test of time, and, as he hoped in the introduction to this paper, it has proven useful in analyzing the vowel system of another Micronesian language, namely, Pohnpeian.

While the earlier Peace Corps training programs resulted in pedagogical materials designed to teach Micronesian languages to speakers of English, a need for greater in-depth studies of these languages was prompted by a renewed interest in implementing bilingual education in the TTPI. The response was the creation of the Pacific Languages Development Project in 1970, which was jointly funded by the TTPI, the University of Hawai'i, and the East-West Center. It targeted all the major and several minor languages of the TTPI, in addition to Nauruan. Its goals were (1) to develop standard orthographies, (2) to produce reference grammars, (3) to compile bilingual dictionaries, and (4) to train Micronesian linguists. This project was followed by two others that were designed to train Micronesian educators to work in bilingual education programs and to produce vernacular language materials for Micronesian schools. These three projects collectively spanned a period of thirteen years and brought millions of dollars of external funding to the university. It was the golden age of Micronesian linguistics, involving both students and faculty

in work on Micronesian languages and resulting in a level of documentation for these languages that is perhaps unparalleled for any other sizable subgroup of Oceanic. As Chair of the Department of Linguistics, Byron supported these programs, developed an orthography for Marshallese, and in 1976 published the first dictionary of Marshallese, with Takaji Abo, Alfred Capelle, and Tony DeBrum as coauthors. Alfred Capelle subsequently became Byron's colleague in a variety of undertakings, most notably the implementation of the new Marshallese orthography as evidenced in a joint paper they published in 1996 entitled "Dealing with the ABCs of Marshallese over twenty years." They additionally continued work on Marshallese grammar and lexicography, as discussed further in the section on Byron's postretirement activities.

It should also be noted that in 1971, early during this era, Byron published an important paper, entitled *Micronesian languages*, which discusses the major grammatical features of the languages spoken in geographic Micronesia and how they might be related. In this paper, he employs the term Nuclear Micronesian, a label he had coined earlier for the subgroup of Oceanic languages that includes all the languages of this region except Chamorro, Yapese, Palauan, and the two Polynesian outliers, Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi. Nauruan along with the Nuclear Micronesian languages is now thought to form a higher-order subgroup called Greater Micronesian. This paper was the first to provide an informed overview of the languages of this region. Its significance, as many Micronesianists will agree, is that it laid the foundation for the field of Micronesian linguistics. If, as Alfred North Whitehead quipped, all philosophy is a series of footnotes on Plato, then it might be said that all subsequent work on Micronesian languages is a collection of addenda to Bender 1971.

6.3. TEACHING. Many of Byron's students will remember his inordinate fondness for 7:30 a.m. classes, an enthusiasm that perhaps they did not universally share. Byron, though, had impressive self-discipline, and early classes allowed him to make good use of his time, as evidenced by his many accomplishments.

Department chairs are required to teach just one course a semester. Nevertheless, Byron taught a broad range of courses during his tenure in the department. Like all faculty, he sometimes not only taught service courses—*Introduction to the Study of Language* and *General Linguistics*—but also taught courses in articulatory and acoustic phonetics, field methods, and applied lexicography, as well as a number of seminars dealing with Marshallese, Micronesian languages, and morphology. One of these seminars, *Problems in Comparison and Prehistory: Proto-Micronesian*, met both formally and informally over the course of four years (1978–81). It brought together graduate students and faculty in the task of reconstructing Proto-Micronesian. One of its more immediate outcomes was a collection of papers published in 1984 in a volume edited by Byron entitled *Studies in Micronesian Linguistics*. It also resulted in one of his postretirement publications, as discussed below. In 1982, the department added *Linguistics 420: Morphology* to

its list of course requirements, and Byron taught that course nearly every year thereafter until his retirement in 2000. Although Byron chaired just six PhD dissertation committees, he served as a committee member on fifty-one others. He also chaired ten MA theses and was a member of twenty-one MA committees. In total, he served on eighty-eight graduate student committees, evidencing the respect that students had for his guidance and support.

6.4. SERVICE. On the basis of his early work in Micronesian education, Byron was invited to visit New Zealand in 1968 as a “foreign expert” to advise the government on Māori education. Not long after he published his report in 1971, a national survey made the shocking discovery that only 2% of children in Māori households were learning Māori as a home language. Some of Byron’s recommendations in 1971 foreshadowed the Māori language revival movement that began later that decade (Pawley 2002). They also foreshadowed the UHM linguistics department’s strong commitment to language documentation and conservation.

As a longtime department chair, Byron was active in the LSA, directing the large LSA Summer Institute in Honolulu in 1977 cohosted by the University of Hawai‘i and the East-West Center. He was also a member of the LSA Program Committee in 1987–89, as chair in the final year, and was the first official LSA Parliamentarian in 1995–97. In addition, Byron served as the lead planner of the 1974 and 1991 meetings of the *International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, which were hosted by UHM, and acted as an external reviewer for linguistics programs at universities in Canada and New Zealand.

Byron’s administrative talents were widely respected throughout the university community, especially in the role of peacemaker. During the 1980s, he was a weekly columnist on university issues for *Viewpoint* on public radio station KHVH and was also active in two national faculty advocacy organizations, the AAUP and the NEA. He served for sixteen years on the board of directors of the UH Professional Assembly, including six as president. It was during his tenure as president in 1986 that he oversaw changes to the constitution and by-laws that finally brought unity to the faculty union, which until that time was an uneasy alliance of Mānoa campus “AAUP types” and community college teachers affiliated with the NEA (Grace 2001:6). He also served six years on the UH Mānoa Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In 1987, the governor appointed him to the Hawai‘i Public Employees Health Fund Board, where he served for eight years.

Even the famously nonhierarchical Quakers recognized Byron’s leadership qualities by asking him to represent the Honolulu Friends Meeting on the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, an organization of ordained clergy from a wide range of religious organizations throughout the state (Bender n.d.). Byron and Lois had joined the Quaker meeting after finding no Mennonite congregation in Hawai‘i. They remained active lifelong members.

In 1992, Byron took on the role of editor-in-chief of the department's flagship journal, *OL*, founded and then edited for thirty years by George W. Grace. This additional duty perhaps helped convince him to step down as department chair in 1995, and he continued as editor even after officially retiring in 2000. In 2007, he passed the editorship to John Lynch. Byron had long served as *OL*'s managing editor, whose principal production task was to compile the language index for each volume. He eventually automated this and many other production tasks, thanks to his computer skills and his willingness to be on the "bleeding edge" of technological change. The *OL* production cycle had long depended on freelance copyeditors, Hong Kong typesetters, and freelance proofreaders for each issue, each step adding time and expense threatened by repeated university budget cuts during the 1990s.

In his new role, Byron consulted frequently with one of his linguistics graduates (Bradshaw), who used to copyedit *OL* during the 1980s and whom he had helped secure a job in 1992 as publication specialist, which included editing as well as desktop publishing, at the nearby UH Center for Korean Studies. Byron soon began desktop publishing with Pagemaker, and the two linguists would often discuss details of copyediting and typography. (Byron was an ardent *which*-hunter, which he replaced with *that* in restrictive relative clauses.) When PageMaker proved inadequate, he upgraded to FrameMaker, which was designed for complex structured documents. The nature of his technical questions about the latter much impressed the UH Press FrameMaker expert Cindy Chun, who later worked with Byron as production editor for *OL*. Byron soon handled all the editing and layout himself, relying only on an external proofreader to check his work. He became expert enough to train his successor, John Lynch, to perform the same expanded editorial functions that he had taken on. Lynch edited *OL* from 2007 to 2018. These two editors saved the journal thousands of dollars each year in production costs and greatly sped up the turnaround time from submission to publication, which in turn attracted more attention from the rapidly growing number of scholars researching the languages of Oceania. *OL* page counts began to swell. Not long after Bradshaw became the journals manager at the UH Press in 1998 (again on Byron's recommendation), the Press added its journals to Project MUSE and JSTOR, which greatly increased the readership of *OL* and eventually produced enough additional revenue to make it possible once again to outsource the copyediting and layout of the journal.

7. POSTRETIREMENT ACTIVITIES: 2000–20. Byron's research and service continued to bear fruit well into his retirement years. In 2003, after he had retired, the governor appointed Byron to the UH Board of Regents, where he served through June 2008.

In 2003, the extensive list of Proto-Micronesian reconstructions compiled in the seminars he directed from 1978 to 1982 was edited and published in

OL. Because this work bordered on book length, running to 197 pages, it was published in two parts, in the June and December issues.

Morphology, too, continued to occupy a central place in his thinking. Considerations of morphology were a necessary part of his analysis of Marshallese, beginning with his dissertation. However, from teaching the department's course in morphology, he began in 1988 to publish papers on this topic that were of broader theoretical interest. After retirement, he merged his interests in morphology and Micronesian languages in a paper that he published in 2006, entitled *The whole-word morphology of Micronesian noun inflection*. The phonological alternations exhibited in possessive noun paradigms in these languages had been a topic of discussion in some of the department's phonology courses as early as 1970. Byron provided an alternative approach to dealing with these phenomena within a model that significantly parted ways with standard generative phonology.

Byron's interest in lexicography and the lexicon of Marshallese also continued to play a central role in his postretirement activities. In 2009, Byron and Stephen Trussel produced a *Marshallese-English Online Dictionary* (<http://www.trussel2.com/mod/>), which is a revised and expanded version of the 1976 print edition. It is an impressive accomplishment, which includes, among other features, alternate strategies for finding words, approximately 11,000 sample sentences, a list of Marshallese place names, and an English finder list. It also incorporates a novella written by Alfred Capelle, from which many sample sentences were drawn. Although perhaps not the largest dictionary of a Micronesian language, it is arguably the best.

Byron's final publication, in 2016, was the *Marshallese reference grammar*, coauthored with Alfred Capelle, his good friend who is a native speaker of Marshallese, and Louise Pagotto, his former student who wrote her dissertation on Marshallese syntax. Byron began work on this grammar in the early 1970s but competing obligations prevented him from being able to finish it. Retirement finally allowed him time to return to this effort and to complete it. This major publication stands as a fitting culmination of Byron's lifelong interest in the Marshallese language and the people who speak it.

The new orthography for Marshallese based on Byron's analysis is typographically challenging, using diacritics not easily supported by Unicode. In 2002, the Center for Pacific Island Studies published *Melal: A Novel of the Pacific* by graduate student Robert Barclay, who had grown up in the Marshalls. Alfred Capelle checked the Marshallese names and terms, and Byron used his new typographic skills to produce camera-ready copy that met the UH Press standards. In gratitude for their help, Barclay established the Alfred Capelle and Byron Bender Endowed Scholarship Fund at the UH Foundation. The Bender family has asked that any donations in Byron's name be directed to that endowment fund to help Marshallese students enrolled at UH.

8. REMEMBRANCES. This memorial has thus far described some of Byron's many accomplishments, but it falls short of depicting who Byron was as a man. In an attempt to convey some idea of his character, a small number of his colleagues and former students were invited to provide a short paragraph about their remembrances of him and how he impacted their lives. A sampling of their comments is as follows.

8.1. BYRON'S CENTRAL ROLE IN UHM'S DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS. "When I first learned of Professor Bender's passing, my first thought was that it could not possibly be true. For me, the work of the Linguistics Department at the University of Hawai'i and the low-key humorous guidance and encouragement from Dr. Bender were inseparable."—Frederick Jackson

"I have always thought of the Department of Linguistics as 'Byron's department' and his presence is still felt here by those of us who knew him and worked with him."—William O'Grady

8.2. BYRON'S LEADERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF MICRONESIAN LINGUISTICS. "With his incredible foresight and program management skills, Professor Bender created the field of Micronesian linguistics, expanded it, polished it and maintained it for decades . . . Professor Bender has left us, but his smiling face will remain in our minds as the big icon of Micronesian linguistics."—Hiroshi Sugita.

8.3. BYRON'S ROLE AS A MENTOR AND GUIDE. "Dr. Byron Bender was not only my great academic advisor in linguistics at UHM (1965–1969), but also the most benevolent guide and supporter during my whole academic and professional life . . . Indeed, Dr. Bender was my greatest mentor to whom I was most deeply indebted for what I am."—Ho-min Sohn

"As my dissertation chairman, Dr. Bender gave me a great deal of freedom. We did not meet frequently when I was writing, but when we did, his eyes would at times twinkle with interest or quiet amusement. For my own work, as researcher and as faculty member, no one could have been a better, more knowledgeable or more encouraging guide than Byron Bender."—Frederick Jackson

"He was patient with my youthful hubris; encouraging with my attempts to learn a little linguistics; a personal friend during the time we worked together preparing language materials in Molokai; and a supporter at a time in 1969–70 when my life was under severe stress."—John Jensen

"Dr. Byron Bender was pivotal in my academic and professional life . . . I've not known a more gracious, more steadfast individual."—Louise Pagotto

"As I look back, virtually all my projects over the past decade have been a result of my connection with Dr. Byron Bender . . . my life would be nowhere near as rich and productive without him."—Stephen Trussel

OL “basically went straight from my laptop to the printer. I couldn’t have done it without him: he was extraordinarily helpful in teaching me the software ropes, and unfailingly patient with it.”—John Lynch

“When I first met Dr Bender I readily became his protégé. He was an important mentor and guide for me while I was working with him on the Marshallese–English dictionary, as well as while I was a student at the University of Hawai‘i . . . I owe much to Dr Bender for his careful and professional guidance and counsel . . . Dr Bender is a man of remarkable knowledge about language, particularly the Marshallese language and its key role in the lives of our island people.” (Capelle 2001)

8.4. BYRON’S HUMANITY AND QUIET HUMILITY. “Byron was a great and gifted man. He was guided by a spirit of kindness and fairness, a readiness—eagerness even—to help others, and a willingness to take on heavy responsibilities in the department, the union, and the university that others would not or could not.”—William O’Grady

“Although he was always willing to do things for others, he was reluctant to ask us to do things for him.”—Stephen Trussel

“As a talkative student, I sometimes wanted him to be more talkative, but when I attended a Friends meeting, the quiet calm of the service gave me insight to his style. His guidance allowed this nontraditional student to become more than she ever could have imagined.”—Emily Hawkins

“In his presence, I learned to be quiet, not to fill the silence with words.” — Louise Pagotto

“My memories of Byron focus on his quietness; he never mentioned his own research interests or his outside connections. He never discussed what other people in the department were doing. He always opened his conversations asking me about my research and the problems I had, always offering carefully thought-out solutions . . . I remember when he was the Director of the LSA institute in 1977, he had asked me to be his assistant, a role which Byron made easy by his organizing skills and personal humor, often directed at himself. . . . He was the epitome of a scholar and a gentleman, always pleasant, always concerned about the other person.”—Lawrence Reid

Byron’s quiet humility brings to mind a quote often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words.” Byron was not one to preach, about the Gospel or anything else. Instead, he modeled for all of us the possibility of living a life of gentle kindness and deep integrity.

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