In Memoriam

Reinhold Grimm
Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature and Languages, Emeritus
UC Riverside
1931-2009

Dr. Reinhold Grimm, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the Department of Comparative Literatures and Foreign Languages at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), passed away on March 5, 2009, in Riverside. Dr. Grimm’s field of research and teaching was primarily in German and Comparative Literature from the 18th to the 21st centuries. He is best known for his work on the towering German playwright and poet, theorist and practitioner of the theater Bertolt Brecht.

Born in Nuremberg, Germany on May 21, 1931, Professor Grimm earned his Ph.D. summa cum laude from Erlangen University in his native Bavaria, having also studied at the University of Colorado at Boulder as a Fulbright Scholar. He taught at Erlangen (1957-61) and Goethe University in Frankfurt (1961-67) before emigrating to the United States. He spent a brief time as a visiting professor at Columbia University before joining the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, Madison in the autumn of 1967. He first held the Alexander Hohfeld Professor of German (1967-1980), and later was named as the Vilas Research Professor of Comparative Literature and German (1980-1990). He joined the faculty of UCR in 1990 where he remained until his retirement in 2003. In 2008, he received the 2008-09 Outstanding Emeritus Award for the University of California, Riverside.

Dr. Grimm was a prolific scholar, conducting research, translating, and editing 18th-to-21st century German literature. He published fifteen monographs, edited ten volumes, co-edited thirty-five more, and published over 200 articles and essays. He authored several translations and studies of the poetry and other writings of Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Georg Büchner, Rainer Maria Rilke, Felix Pollak, and Gottfried Benn. He took special pride in his translation of Enzensberger’s poems in a volume entitled Lighter than Air (2000). His authored or edited monographs on German poetry, drama, novels and culture are primarily written in German, including (with titles here in English translation) Blacks and German Culture (1986), Exile and Inner Immigration (1986), Theories of the German Novel (1971), German Revolutionary Drama (1969), and Structures: Essays on German Literature (1963). For several years in the 1980s and 1990s, he was the editor of Monatshefte, a premier venue for German studies.
published by the University of Wisconsin. Among the impressive array of continuing publications he accomplished in his retirement are four books, including translations and commentaries of the poems of the German poet Guenther Kunert, a volume on Brecht's prose and poetry, and a sole-authored monograph on Fielding's Tom Jones. Professor Grimm also shared his work more widely with the public by offering English-speaking translations of insightful verses on the truths of daily life and human relations.

Dr. Grimm received various prizes and awards for his work both in Germany and the US, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1969. He also served as the National President of the American Association of Teachers of German and as Founding President of the International Brecht Society. He lectured or published on all continents, except Antarctica.

Dr. Grimm is survived by his wife, Anneliese, his daughter, Sabine Goldberg, his son-in-law, Gary, and his two grandsons, Daniel and Matthew, all of Riverside.

This memorial was adapted from an unattributed obituary circulated by the UCR Chancellor’s Office with editorial changes made by Katja M. Guenther.