In Memoriam: Samuel J. Stroum

On Friday, March 9, renowned Seattle philanthropist Samuel J. Stroum passed away. Stroum played an integral role in the University of Washington Press’s development for more than twenty years, beginning in 1976 when the first book in The Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies series was published. In 1990, in response to the Press’s first National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant, Samuel and Althea Stroum created another series, Samuel and Althea Stroum Books, to support the publication of works of lasting significance concerned with all aspects of the humanities. As a result of their patronage, the University of Washington Press has published many significant works in these fields. We are honored to be a part of Samuel Stroum’s generous legacy.

Press Launches
The Pacific Northwest Poetry Series

On October 19, at the home of Rick and Valerie Rapport, poets and poetry enthusiasts gathered to celebrate the launch of the University of Washington Press’s Pacific Northwest Poetry Series and the publication of its first volume, For the Century’s End: Poems 1990-1999, by John Haines. Series editor Linda Bierds was joined by Haines, Press editor Gretchen Van Meter, lifelong arts supporter Cynthia Sears, Press staff, and advisory board members to inaugurate this exciting new venture.

The Pacific Northwest Poetry Series is dedicated to publishing the finest work of contemporary Northwest poets. While their themes may or may not be regional, participating poets will have a longstanding relationship with the Pacific Northwest and must have been residents of Washington, Oregon, Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, or western Montana for a minimum of five years. Manuscripts are considered at the invitation of series editor Linda Bierds, professor of English at the University of Washington, author of six books of poetry, and a recipient of a fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The first poet in the series, John Haines, is the author of fourteen books of poetry and five books of essays. His honors include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Academy of American Poets; the Alaska Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts; the Western States Arts Federation Lifetime Achievement Award; the Lenore Marshall/Nation Award; the Poets Prize; and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature. He lives in Missoula, Montana, and in addition to attending our reception, he traveled to Seattle to read his work at Northwest Bookfest and Open Books: A Poem Emporium.

Remember friends with a gift to the University of Washington Press

The Press gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

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To publish poetry well requires a coordinating editor who knows the field and who can collaborate with Linda and the poets through all stages of the production of their books. We are grateful to have Gretchen Van Miler, a published poet herself, to serve in this critical role. Gretchen was a staff editor at the Press for eleven years, who, after retirement, enthusiastically agreed to continue with us on a freelance basis to edit the Pacific Northwest Poetry Series. With her keen eye and strong advocacy, the series was launched successfully.

Once we had our editorial plan in place, we faced the daunting task of seeking funding to support the series. We knew that scholarly publishing is not-for-profit publishing, but poetry is an even more risky financial proposition. Serendipitously, a friend of both Linda and Gretchen, Cynthia Sears, stepped forward to provide us with the resources to publish our first volume: For the Century’s End: Poems 1990-1999, by John Haines.

Publishing poetry is not new for the University of Washington Press. In the 1970s and 1980s, we published several volumes of fine regional poets, and in 1997 we published a volume of poetry in our Asian American program. However, the market for poetry has always been modest at best, and we felt we did not have the editorial and financial resources to publish poetry well. In 1999, we approached Linda Bierds to see if she would be interested in editing an invited series of regional poetry for us. We knew that scholarly publishing is not-for-profit publishing, but poetry is an even more risky financial proposition. Serendipitously, a friend of both Linda and Gretchen, Cynthia Sears, stepped forward to provide us with the resources to publish our first volume: For the Century’s End: Poems 1990-1999, by John Haines.

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and a significant contribution to the literature on tourist arts and collecting. While Haida art has long been recognized as central to the development of the highly formalized northern Northwest Coast style of design, it has often been viewed as somewhat static and anonymous.

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In 1996, the University of Washington Press received $90,000 from the Getty Grant Program to help us publish four book-length studies on North American Native Art. This fall, the Press completed publication of the last of these distinguished scholarly books.

The Yapak Whaler’s Shrine (September, 1996) by Abdon Jondalas, director of the University of Alaska Museum and professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, describes a remarkable collection of materials from the Mowachalt band of the Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka), an assemblage of 92 canoes wooden figures and whales, 16 human skulls, and the small building that sheltered them. The shrine had for centuries stood in Yukut, or Friendly Cove, on the remote west coast of Vancouver Island, visited by only chiefs and their wives. In 1905, George Hunt, at the invitation of anthropologist Franz Boas, acquired the collection for the American Museum of Natural History. In this fascinating study, Jondalas reconstructs the history of the shrine both before and after its acquisition for the museum, after which it was reassembled in anthropological and historical settings, film, television, and newspapers.

In Privileging the Past: Reconstructing History in Northwest Coast Art (October, 1999), art historian and sculptor Judith Otwosztkiewicz approaches questions of authenticity and tradition in Northwest Coast art through a careful consideration of replicas, reproductions, and creative translations of past forms of Northwest Coast dances, ceremonies, masks, painted screens, and houses. In a series of case studies, Otwosztkiewicz examines two very different forms of architectural construction, a museum dance performance adapting traditional elements for a complex theatrical presentation, and modern sculpture and dance paraphernalia and their relations to art of the past.

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Michael Burnap

Michael Burnap is currently the Manager for Customer Support at Fidesic Corporation. Prior to joining Fidesic, Burnap was a Vice-President and Manager at Bank of America. He received his BA in Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of Colorado and his MAT from Columbia Teacher's College and International Finance at the University of Southern California. He has served as the Development Advisory Board Chair for two years.

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