

2011 Memorials

Max Crawford

August 6, 1938 – October 7, 2010

By Greg Curtis (read by Thomas Zigal at April 30, 2011, TIL's annual banquet)

Max Crawford was a lumbering, fleshy, handsome man with curly blond hair who published a dozen novels between 1975 and his death last year. The best was probably *Lords of the Plain* (1985). Max roared in joy one moment and then slumped in despair the next when he learned that Ronald Reagan had read it in the White House and recommended it to his friends.

During all his adult life, Max was a committed, hard-core communist with an independent income – a type more commonly found in Italy or England than in the Texas panhandle. A farmer's son from Floydada who much preferred books to crops and livestock, a man with a wife and a son and a daughter who knew how to find a woman in a honky-tonk, a Marxist with money in the bank, Max saw the world as a vast plain of battles large and small between opposing forces. He once worked for weeks on a short story based on an incident in the life of Bertolt Brecht under the title "The Man Who Said No." Then he worked just as long on the same story under the title "The Man Who Said Yes." Then he worked on the story longer still. When he finally gave up, it was called "The Man Who Said Yes and No."

He wrote constantly and published regularly and at the same time was bitter and fatalistic about his career. Much against his publisher's wishes, he obstinately insisted on naming one novel *The Bad Communist*, even though he – and the publisher – knew the title doomed the novel to oblivion. He convinced himself – or at least tried to convince himself – that his writing was part of the struggle against capitalism. Then, in the next breath, he would say that from then on he would write only for money. His idea was to write a series of westerns based on Shakespeare's tragedies. With growing excitement, he outlined the plots. But then his ruefulness would return. "When I sell out," he said, "I hope someone's buying."

Of course, he never sold out, and to Max selling out was defined as listening to someone else. He resisted editors and their editing. Even friends couldn't change his determination to write what he wanted to write. He saw any advice, no matter how well-meaning, as yet another opposing force that had to be overcome. I used to think it was his greatest weakness, but now I'm not so sure. Max wrote very fine prose. His books are sometimes murky and always

violent, but his fearlessness and his disappointment, his rage and his stubbornness, his love of language and his great horror at the world's cruelty – he got all of that and more down on the page. Only a handful of writers can say as much.

And, Max was great fun and a great friend. I met him in Houston in the mid 60's when I was an undergraduate at Rice. He was slightly older than I, married, aspiring to write, and spending his days in the Rice library reading back issues of *The New Yorker*. Then we both ended up in the Bay Area for about ten years. Max threw – or knew about – raucous parties where he held forth. He relished touch football and endless games of chess and poker marathons where for a while we all affected powdered snuff. Max loved games of all kinds and couldn't stand to hear about a game without knowing the rules. One favorite in California was what he called "Dirty Guggenheim" where he slanted the categories in his favor – Texas counties, for example. Eventually, he moved to France for several years and then to London and finally to Montana, and mostly we were out of touch. I last saw him in London. He was working most days in the library of the British Museum doing research for a novel about the British in China before the revolution. Max's world was still one of opposing forces, so the novel was called *The Red and the White*. (He finally self-published it in 1996.) He was living alone like a renegade aristocrat in a comfortable apartment near Hampstead Heath. A cricket match on the radio droned on in the background. Occasionally, Max would stop in mid sentence to listen more carefully, delighted that the Bahaman team was stomping the British.

William H. Goetzmann

July 20, 1930 – September 7, 2010

By Paula Marks

My first impression of Bill Goetzmann, who died last September at the age of 80, is also one of my most lasting: he rears back nonchalantly on a wooden chair at the front of a University of Texas classroom in 1980, the chair and the man appearing about to topple onto the floor. "Dr. G.," as his students call him, has his hands linked over his head, a lit cigarette dangling from his fingers. A new doctoral student, I watch in fascination as the ash burns steadily over his bare scalp, the ash, too, threatening to fall at any moment. And he asks of the class, "Why do Americans have lawns?"

All of this, I would learn, was true Goetzmann: the precarious positioning, the confidence, the provocative question offered up. I would also learn something of the brilliance, the bitter frustration, and the caring depths of the man.

He told me once that he knew as a young Yale faculty member writing his *Exploration and Empire* that the book would win the Pulitzer Prize. He said this matter-of-factly, as if noting simple cause and effect. Still, he had the kind of wounded and insistent ego I have seen in other men who have felt a need to fight and struggle for their place in the world. I spent a very uncomfortable dinner with him at a Santa Fe history conference where he felt we had been seated at a table of “nobodies” and said so out loud.

I do not want this to obscure his sweetness, though. He took great pride and interest in his doctoral students as individuals on our own intellectual quests. He continued to value and champion us long after we last passed through the doors of Garrison Hall. And I learned that the bitterness that could flare from him in his later years stemmed in large part from his frustration that he could not alter the world for the family, friends, and former students about whom he cared.

That bitterness could not quench his curiosity and intellectual breadth. It bothered him when academics defined disciplines and approaches and themes in narrow, territorial ways; he saw all knowledge as a vast, rich terrain beckoning those who could navigate or ignore the boundaries. Only the year before his death, his final book, *Beyond the Revolution: A History of American Thought from Paine to Pragmatism*, reminded us all of how this could be done.

In many ways, he remains like the explorers about whom he wrote, always beckoning us into new terrain.

Eugene McKinney

October 22, 1922 - December 1, 2010

By Robert Flynn

Born in Fort Worth. Resident of San Antonio since 1963 when he became playwright-in-residence at Trinity University. Bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees from Baylor University. Playwright and teacher of playwriting. Twelve of his plays were produced, including “A Different Drummer,” “Cross-Eyed Bear,” “The Answer is Two,” and “Of Time and the River.” Television scripts included “A Different Drummer” for CBS; “So Deeply in the Well Known Heart Of” for NBC; and “I Came, I Saw, I Left” for ABC. Early teaching positions: professor at Baylor and professor of playwriting at the Dallas Theater Center. Served in U.S. Army during World War II. While a sergeant with the 3rd Army in Europe, he received a battlefield commission and became a 2nd lieutenant. Survived by his wife Treysa and son Michael. Eugene McKinney wrote 12 plays and numerous TV scripts but he always said he was proudest of the accomplishments of his students. Several years before he died he showed me a bookcase containing the books written by fifty of his former students. Today that case would contain many more books by many more former students. Students who became members of TIL include Preston Jones, Naomi Shihab Nye, Jay Brandon and I.

Claude Ignatius Stanush

June 18, 1918 - March 26, 2011

By Palmer Hall

Here are a few facts about Claude Stanush, a distinguished writer, journalist, member of TIL:

He graduated from St. Mary's University in 1939 when he was 19 years old. He served as editor-in-chief of the "All Catholic/All American" college newspaper until he was lured away by *The San Antonio Light* to become a "real" reporter. As a young man in his 20s and 30s, he wrote for *Life Magazine*. Steve Bennett, who wrote Claude's obituary for *The San Antonio Express-News*, said that one of his *Life* stories inspired the Robert Mitchum film, *The Lusty Men*. His publications are varied: articles in such disparate magazines as *The Smithsonian*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Harper's Weekly* and books, including a short story collection, *The Balanced Rock* (1988), and nonfiction like *The Newton Boys* (1994) (made into a film starring Matthew McConaughey and Ethan Hawke). His most recent book, *Sometimes It's New York*, is an outstanding collection of stories published by TIL member Bryce Milligan's Wings Press that often reads like superb personal experience essays. His awards include an NEA fellowship and a J. Frank Dobie Award and Fellowship from TIL and UT-Austin.

All of that is factual, concrete. But the life Claude Stanush lived was more than a compilation of facts. Claude was a Texas intellectual. I mean by that that he was always curious; he seemed genuinely interested in everything and everyone. Incredibly generous with his time, he often visited our campus to speak with students about writing and, more importantly, about living. He lived his own life in full: integrity, passion, family. All of that good sense, his good humor, ethical beliefs...all of it is in his writing and was displayed in his daily life. He and one of his three daughters worked together to write and publish a children's book, *All Honest Men*, which received a starred review in *Kirkus Reviews*, and were working on a second book. His wife, Barbara, is a fine poet and essayist. The poet and children's writer, Naomi Shihab Nye, said of Claude, in Steve Bennet's obituary of him, that "He was a precious friend to everyone who knew him and a writer of infinite grace, modesty and wisdom."

He is survived by Barbara and their three daughters, Michele, Pamela and Julie, plus three grandchildren.

David J. Weber

December 20, 1940 – August 20, 2010

By Russell L. Martin III

David Weber, who died August 20, 2010, of multiple myeloma, was the leading historian of Ibero-American borderlands, Mexico, and the U.S. Southwest of his generation. His work simply transformed the field. A scholar's scholar, David Weber wrote over 70 articles and published 27 books. And yet, as valuable and enduring as his publications have been, perhaps his greatest legacy will be his personal associations, the friendships he established with fellow historians, especially graduate students and younger scholars at the beginning of their careers.

David Weber joined SMU's Department of History in 1976 and chaired the Department from 1979 to 1986. He also held the Robert and Nancy Dedman Chair in History in SMU's Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. Weber was the founding director of the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at SMU, part of the Clements Department of History, both endowed by former Texas Governor William P. Clements and his wife, Rita.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Weber earned a Ph.D. in Latin American history at the University of New Mexico. He also taught at San Diego State University (1967-76), at the Universidad de Costa Rica as a Fulbright Lecturer (1970) and at Harvard University as a visiting professor (2002). Throughout his career he was able to balance the demands of teaching with research, always as generous with and dedicated to the lowly undergraduate as he was with advanced specialists.

His broad knowledge, analytical mind, and insistence on clear, jargon-free prose assisted a host of Clements Center fellows turn their manuscripts into successful books. Hundreds of other scholars throughout the world followed Weber's work and learned from his publications. He retired from teaching in spring 2010 because of failing health but continued his research and writing to the end.

Among his publications, several should be singled out. *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of Mexican Americans* (University of New Mexico Press, 1973) was selected as one of the Outstanding Academic Books of the year by *Choice* magazine. *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 1982) won six awards, including the Ray Allen Billington prize from the Organization of American Historians. *Richard H. Kern: Expeditionary Artist in the Far Southwest, 1848-1853* (University of New Mexico Press & the Amon Carter Museum, 1985) received the 1985 Outstanding Art Book Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (Yale University Press, 1992) was named one of the notable books of 1992 by *The New York Times* and won several awards, among them the "Spain and America" prize from the Spanish Ministry of Culture. *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (Yale University Press, 2005) won the American Historical Association's 2006 award "for the best publication in the history of Spain, Portugal, or Latin America."

In 2007 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition, he was a member of the Texas Institute of Letters, the American Antiquarian Society, PEN, the Mexican Academy of History, and the Society of American Historians. Weber held fellowships from the Huntington Library, the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Center for

Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, and the Lamar Center at Yale. No one was a better ambassador for libraries and advanced research than David Weber.

In fact, I first met David when I was a librarian at the American Antiquarian Society and I had the honor of giving him a tour of the library stacks (he was on an NEH site visit in the early 1990s). Somehow I had missed taking a course from him when I was an undergraduate at SMU in the 1970s, but we struck up an immediate friendship, having not only SMU in common but a lively devotion to books, manuscripts, and research. His interest in promoting library welfare only intensified when I became the director of the DeGolyer Library at SMU in 2001. David Weber was among our staunchest benefactors, having served on the DeGolyer Foundation advisory board in the 1970s.

Like Juan Oñate, who in 1603 inscribed “Paso por aqui” in the rock at El Morro, New Mexico, David Weber left us all with an enduring sense of his presence: through his teaching, through his writings, and through his friendship. He passed through our lives and our institutions, making us all the richer.