

Jay

Jay Allen has referred to me as his “oldest living graduate student,” a title I bear with pride, for I have known and admired him ever since my earliest graduate student days, exactly forty years ago. Not only did he direct my doctoral dissertation (in 1970 I became the first to complete one under his guidance), but Jay was the most influential of the several great teachers, mentors, and exemplars I have had in my life. He taught me how to read, understand, appreciate, and teach both Cervantes and Spanish poetry. My own *Don Quijote* course, as I have taught it over the years both at the University of Missouri and at Purdue University, is modeled on the one he taught at the University of Florida. I can still remember the excitement generated in that class, both by the readings of Cervantes’ novel and the discussions with Jay and the other students. It was that class that convinced me to shift my interest from Spanish American narrative to Cervantes. It was the paper I wrote for that class that provided the basic theme for my dissertation, and it was the dissertation that provided the basic theme for my book on *Don Quijote* published in 1982.

But Jay has been more than a classroom teacher and graduate mentor to me over the years; he has also been one of the primary intellectual and moral standards in my life, as I have often in a time of crisis or stress paused to think, “What would Jay do in this situation?” In I, 25, Don Quijote tells Sancho that the person who aspires to distinction in any endeavor should imitate the best of models. Jay has been my model on more than one occasion and when I grow up I hope to be like him. Jay once said that if he could write his own epitaph it would be “He gave more than he took,” and this is indeed a fair assessment of his life and works.

I will not cite other examples of his generosity, wisdom, and

scholarly rigor, but merely state that together with Patricia Finch, Jay Allen represents the best that our profession—our species—has to offer. I am honored to have known him.

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