

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
TERENCE MARTIN
(March 9, 1925 –May 26, 2016)

Before he was a Hoosier, Terry Martin was a fully armed Ohioan, born in Cleveland and educated at John Carroll University (BA, 1949) and the Ohio State University (MA 1950; PhD 1954). Yet when he arrived in Bloomington in 1954, he would remain a member of the Department of English at Indiana University in various capacities for the next sixty-two years, ascending inevitably through all the ranks, including a short stretch as an associate dean. Even before 1984, when he was named Distinguished Professor, he had become not only prominent among his departmental colleagues, but also a conspicuously visible member among a national and international circle of indispensable scholars in their common mission of illuminating American nineteenth-century literature and culture.

By the time new Americanists in the 1960s joined the Department of English, Terry Martin was just old enough to be a mentor and young enough – with prodigious energy – to symbolize in one person the yeasty excitement that generally characterized the Indiana department in those years. More than one young colleague in search of local color in Bloomington found an in-house example in Terry’s battered, once-blue Volkswagen bug when, foraging for lunch off campus, they could watch the varied kinds of Monroe County street pavement through the mostly open floorboards over a chassis that was (with sweaty crossed fingers) still intact.

As a teacher Terry was dedicated to his courses with both undergraduate and graduate students, whose appreciation of his incisive and tonic lectures was repeatedly recorded in their teaching evaluations over the years. While his teaching manner was vigorous (often ardent), Terry never forgot that his real purpose in those classes was to convey substance more than style. Outside the classroom, he actually enjoyed reading the prose of colleagues, which like some genial surgeon he meticulously took apart. He preferred concise syntax, accurate with a little bite. Numerous junior members of the department benefited from his high expectations. Although he disliked the academic jangle of officialese, when he served for two years as an associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, he accepted the fact that committee reports had their own formal shape, sound, and purpose. If a single term seemed to satisfy his own administrative talents, his perceptive advice and counsel to younger colleagues in the College extended long after his formal duties ended.

During his distinguished career Terry Martin in books and essays explored the impact of Scottish common-sense philosophy on early American writing (*The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction*: 1961); synthesized biographical and critical interpretations of canonical nineteenth-century authors (*Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 1965; revised edition 1983; and an edition of *The Scarlet Letter*, 1967), and essays on James Fennimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, and Henry James; and he also ventured into fresh

explications of more modern texts (Willa Cather, Ken Kesey). But, as he liked to insist to his younger colleagues, “Publication is merely teaching in a larger classroom.” That meant thousands of readers all over the world, but literally it also included two stints at the University of Dijon, three at the University of Hawaii, and visiting professorships at West Point, the Universities of Hyderabad, Mainz, Frankfurt, the Free University of Berlin, and the University of California at Berkeley.

At Indiana the classroom was smaller, but more intensive. In *Parables of Possibility* (1995), a wide-ranging study of Americans’ perpetual need for beginnings, Terry alluded to the “festival energy” of the Revolutionary generation and to what he called Henry David Thoreau’s “arch flamboyance,” both terms that could be summoned as apt descriptions of Terry’s own sense of professorial style. Before his first decade at Indiana University had ended, this consummate scholar had steered himself with both toughness and flair through every undergraduate survey course and all the graduate seminars in American literature listed in the course catalog of the department. Not precisely joyful, but a Thoreauvian archness also marked his duties on academic committees, both in his own department and in the large ones that demanded judgment of colleagues for promotion and tenure. Fellow committee members would uniformly note Terry’s judiciousness, the kind of practical nuance that refined the distinction between rigor and rigidity.

If *Parables of Possibility*, Terry’s final, expansive book, displays his judiciousness, it also, almost to a fault, exemplifies his generosity. Only infrequently could scholars other than Terry Martin cite as relevant those texts whose critical principles both endorsed and disputed his own operating position – as if to say that both sides would just have to learn how to get along on a level playing field that, perhaps with a smidgen of irony, he had carefully prepared for them. And if this rare scholar could direct his generous recognition to peers of long-standing, he was even rarer in acknowledging the contributions of former graduate students, a gesture that reflected what went on in the literal classroom as well as in ad hoc discussions with his junior colleagues.

If the Department of English that Terry Martin joined in 1954 was far different from the one he left at his retirement in 1991, the changes in style and substance were by and large those that he both relished and promoted. A devoted teacher and a magnanimous colleague at home, Terry was named a Fellow of the Indiana Institute for Advanced Study. As his career advanced, he was systematically admired outside Indiana University, especially for his discriminating eye for quality and his respect for style. He became a favorite reader for university presses and academic journals (*American Literature*, *PMLA*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*) and such grant-awarding institutions as the Fulbright Committee, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Humanities Center. In recognition of his scholarly achievement he was named a Guggenheim Fellow and a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies. Toward the end of his active career, Terry was invited to serve as one of the editors of three major projects: *The Columbia Literary History of the United States*,

The Columbia History of the American Novel, and the multi-volume, ongoing *American National Biography*. Copies of his published works, as well as his unpublished papers and letters, are now housed in the Indiana University Archives in the Wellls Library.

I request that this memorial resolution be presented to the members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that copies be preserved in its minutes and archives, and that copies be sent to his daughter, Kathleen Martin Klugman, and son, Terence Martin.

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