

Paul Schach 1915–1998

Paul Schach, one of the pioneering scholars of Pennsylvania German and especially German-American dialects on the Great Plains, and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *American Journal of Germanic Linguistics and Literatures*, died on October 13, 1998.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1915, Paul Schach developed an early love for the German dialects and culture of his ancestors. His studies at Albright College and later at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received the Ph.D. in 1949, led him to the fields of medieval Scandinavian language and literature, medieval German literature, as well as to German and German-American dialectology. Since 1951 his academic home had been the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. He chaired the German department there from 1963 to 1966. From 1966 until his retirement in 1985, he held the Charles J. Mach Professorship. He held visiting professorships at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Colorado, and he received numerous research awards, including grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1986 the University of Nebraska recognized his distinction as a teacher by awarding him the Burlington Northern Outstanding Teacher-Scholar Award.

His Scandinavian studies, particularly those dealing with the Tristan and Isolde theme, emphasized the significance of cross-cultural factors in the development of new linguistic and literary forms. In 1973 he published his meticulous translation of the Old Norse *Tristrams saga*. In 1984 the Twayne series published Schach's *Icelandic sagas*. Schach also served as associate editor (1968–72) and editor (1977–81) of *Scandinavian Studies*.

Schach's work on the origins and present status of Pennsylvania German and of the German settlement dialects of the Great Plains, particularly those of the Germans from Russia in Nebraska, Kansas, and the Dakotas, serves as a model of clarity and reliability and truly represents part of the foundation of German-American dialect studies. As he noted in his introduction to his edition of *Languages in conflict: Linguistic acculturation on the Great Plains* (1980), his research was devoted to preserving for posterity as much as possible of the linguistic

richness and variety that once characterized the Great Plains from Manitoba to Texas and to providing future generations of linguists, humanists, and social scientists with challenging materials to analyze and evaluate.

In addition to his dialect studies, Schach was engaged in German-American cultural studies and devoted his retirement years in collaboration with the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha to a translation of the diary of Maximilian, prince of Wied-Neuwied, who traveled and recorded his experiences in the American West in the 1830s (*Tagebuch einer Reise nach dem nördlichen America in den Jahren 1832, 1833 und 1834*). Schach also served from 1981 until the time of his death as a valued member of the editorial board of the *Yearbook of German-American Studies*. He organized one of the most memorable annual symposia for the Society for German-American Studies at the University of Nebraska in 1985. At the Society's symposium in Chicago in 1989, Paul Schach was awarded the Society for German-American Studies Outstanding Achievement Award.

Paul Schach through his scholarship, his teaching, his professional service, and his ever-present humor and wit enriched the academic profession and the disciplines with which he associated himself. Paul Schach was a true colleague and friend. We shall miss him. [WILLIAM KEEL, *University of Kansas*]

REFERENCES

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