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In Memoriam: Dr. Edgar V. Roberts

February 6, 2020

To the Campus Community:

With great sadness, we report the passing of Edgar V. Roberts, Professor Emeritus of English at Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY, and resident of Scarsdale on Nov. 24, 2019, at age 91. Mr. Roberts was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Oct. 20, 1928, serving in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1947 in the Philippines, Arkansas, and Colorado, later earning his PhD on the plays of Henry Fielding from the University of Minnesota in 1960. From 1979 to 1988, he was the admirable, amiable, and administratively effective Chairman of the Lehman English department. A founding member of Lehman College's Phi Beta Kappa Chapter, Chi of New York in 1971, Ed served as Chapter Historian for well over two decades. His annual disquisition at PBK Inductions on the etymological scope of the Society's name and motto Φιλοσοφία Βίου Κυβερνητης (Love of Wisdom the Guide of Life), was, for many, a high point of the ceremony. He was an early and ardent advocate of The Lehman Scholars Program, Lehman's liberal arts honors program.

Highly successful as an academic author, Roberts wrote books on literature and writing that were of enduring longevity in English composition and literature courses around the nation, selling more than a million copies. His Writing Themes About Literature, first published in 1964, appeared in more than a dozen editions. In 1968, he published a scholarly edition of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera (1728), and in 1969 he published a similar edition of Fielding's The Grub-Street Opera (1731), both with the University of Nebraska Press. In 1986, Roberts published the first edition of his Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing, also revised and enhanced in multiple editions; the ninth edition was published in 2009, by Pearson Longman. The Fourth Compact Edition of Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing was published in 2008, when its author was in his eightieth year.

Ed was an enthusiastic devotee of opera, symphonic music, and choral singing, he himself a member of local church choirs for 40 years, most recently with the Scarsdale Congregational Church and the New Choral Society of Scarsdale. He was a fan of both the New York Mets and the New York Yankees, but was uneasy when the two teams played each other, as he disliked, endearingly, seeing either team lose. An avid jogger since the early 1960s, he enjoyed watching national and international track meets.

In 1954, Roberts married Nanette McNiff in Minnesota. They lived in Detroit from 1957 to 1961, moving to New York in 1961, settling in Scarsdale. They were married 45 years until Nanette, herself a PhD in English, deeply learned and professionally accomplished, predeceased him in 2000. Roberts is survived by his sons Jonathan Roberts of Scarsdale and David Roberts of Rochester, his daughter April E.S. Roberts of New York City, and his greyhound Buzz. **Memorial services will be held at Scarsdale Congregational Church, 1 Heathcote Road, Scarsdale, NY, on Friday, February 7, 2020.**

Sincerely,

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Peter O. Nwosu, PhD

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success

