

Now that he's gone, I wouldn't dream of changing that opening. Besides, Bob was right.

Bob and I go far enough back that I, like so many *JAC* readers, feel that Bob was an old and trusted friend. When I was a graduate student at Ohio State University, we were studying Robert Connors' 1982 Richard Braddock Award winner, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse." Until then, I had thought that rhetoric (that is, history) and composition (that is, practice) were separate fields. Bob showed us how very much rhetoric and composition need and interanimate each other. When "Robert" Connors came to campus that spring, he behaved in his inimitable self-deprecating way, bashfully brushing off the praise for "Modes" and moving ahead to important matters: shouldn't we try to get a seat at his favorite gyro place just north of campus. Gyros—not praise—were what he was after that day, and the days that followed were much the same: he'd change the subject from himself to something he thought more entertaining—food, for instance, or fireworks, or clothes.

Last summer, Bob came to the Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition—his first visit to our campus and to the conference. He was genuinely delighted—and honored, he told me—to be invited as a "featured speaker." He wanted to attend a conference on "Rhetorical Education in America"; he wanted to hear practical, theoretical, and historical papers; he wanted to eat, talk, and walk with the other conferees. He was in his element. After Kathleen Hall Jamieson gave her Fourth of July keynote address, many conferees looked for a cold drink or returned to their rooms. Not Bob (even though he'd driven his Jaguar from New Hampshire that day). He wanted to see State College and the fireworks. He wanted to talk with folks. So Bob and Marie Secor invited him along to see the fireworks display.

The next morning, Bob rushed up to tell me how much he liked breakfast, the conference, and especially the fireworks! He was having a good time in Happy Valley.

As the conference wore on, I'd see Bob surrounded by scholars of all ages, talking about papers, ideas, articles. Bob was a natural magnet for conversation, with his kindly ways, his good humor and wit, and his strong opinions. But during one early confab, he broke away to ask me a sartorial question. He'd noticed that another conferee had been wearing a "cool Hawaiian shirt," and Bob wanted to find one. I gave him directions to the three men's clothing shops in town and sent him on his way. When he returned, after lunch, he was proudly sporting his new Tommy Bahama shirt.

Bob and I didn't always agree—how could any collaborators who had worked on five editions of a book? We didn't always agree about how our *Guide* should sound or look or change, how women could be—had been, in fact—written into the history of rhetoric, how graduate students might best be professionally prepared. There were times when I wanted to bean him—and I'm sure there were plenty of times he wanted to bean me, too. But our disagreements, agreements, and loyalty truly mark our enduring friendship, just as his commitment to Colleen and Aileen, his generosity to his friends, and his intellectual investment in the field of rhetoric and composition mark Bob as the fine man he truly was. We'll all miss him.

When Bob accepted his Braddock Award, he thanked the folks who'd helped him, quoting Yeats, "Say my glory was I had such friends." Indeed, Bob had many such friends. Our glory was having him as one. I'd give anything to catch a glimpse of our friend at the Denver CCCC convention heading out to find a cool western shirt.

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Canonical Bob

Lynn Z. Bloom

Canonical scholars are exciting. That their work is immediately recognized by the cognoscenti as cutting edge goes without saying. That their work is the product of passionate concern, deep understanding, and incalculable effort is not surprising. But it is remarkable that their ways of knowing and explaining their subjects, however arcane or esoteric—such as Balinese cockfights, the Panopticon, or the contact zone—kindle reciprocal passion in the otherwise cool-headed or indifferent, whether they be sophisticated scholars or newcomers to the field. The work of canonical scholars is transformative; it moves the marginal to the mainstream; it changes the flow of the course of knowledge. We take it to our minds, our hearts—even while the occasional radical who dares to disturb the universe (Galileo comes to mind) is being carted off to prison. Yet, because canonical work is foundational—with or without struggle—it becomes embedded in the newly-configured field. Its definitions, concepts, methodology—once dazzlingly new—are taken for granted,

as if we had always known and understood them.

That Bob Connors was a canonical scholar is beyond question. That his work immediately became canonical is not surprising. The status accorded the early work of many of his contemporaries—Peter Elbow, David Bartholomae, Nancy Sommers, Mike Rose, Andrea Lunsford, and Lisa Ede—attests to the newly burgeoning field's immediate recognition of groundbreaking work. Indeed, when Connors earned his PhD from Ohio State University in 1980 with a dissertation directed by Ed Corbett—"A Study of Rhetorical Theories for College Writing Teachers"—the ancient discipline of rhetoric was in the process of rebirth ("composition studies" had not yet been labeled). Connors contributed to its renaissance. His second published article, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse," won the CCC's 1982 Richard Braddock Award. His first book, *Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse*, coedited with Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, received the MLA's 1985 Mina P. Shaughnessy Award. That these still remain among Connors' most widely cited works is further evidence of his canonicity. Around fifty percent of academic publications in all fields are never cited anywhere; another twenty-five to thirty percent are cited a few times (often by their own authors); the remaining heavy hitters are usually cited frequently during the first decade after publication and then hardly at all. But the work of canonical figures remains vital and central, often throughout the lifetime of the author—and long beyond.

The rest, as they say, is history—to be specific, the history of rhetoric and composition studies, particularly in American colleges in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of what we know about this broad area we have learned from Bob Connors, who continued to fulfill his early promise, year in and year out. His illuminating work has appeared without fail since 1980, despite minimal research support, most of it produced at the University of New Hampshire, where he taught from 1984 until his death in June. There, after physically transporting a vanload of Richard Beal's papers to campus, he established the Beal Collection, a composition archive (Connors, the purist, preferred the singular) of historical correspondence, out-of-print journals, and composition textbooks that evolved into the National Archives of Composition and Rhetoric.

Connors contributed to all the major journals. His most recent article, "Frances Wright: First Female Civic Rhetor in America," which focuses on a woman I never knew I wanted to know about until I read it, characterizes his scholarly methodology: sophisticated and eclectic. Drawing on a wealth of primary and secondary sources—no matter how

obscure, fugitive, and controversial—Connors combines biography and nineteenth-century American cultural, intellectual, social, and political history with rhetorical analysis to assess Wright's life and work as a principled, initially engaging, and ultimately quixotic and self-defeating orator. He observes, "As a pioneer woman speaker, she did not blaze a trail that made others' travels easier, but instead created conditions that hurt every woman speaker for fifty years after." As is always the case with canonical research, the subject emerges, as thoroughly compelling in interest and significance. How could we have overlooked Frances Wright before? How can we forget her now? The articles that are my personal favorites, however—the ones I expect my graduate students to understand, address, and even argue with—are not historical but contemporary: "Frequency of Formal Errors in Current College Writing, or Ma and Pa Kettle Do Research" (with Andrea Lunsford) and "Teaching and Learning as a Man." The latter is much more moderate and reasonable than might have emerged in less gracious hands. For instance, he concludes:

If we are to grapple effectively with the attitudes of young men, we cannot continue to view them merely as order-takers, or sulky vandals, or cultural naïfs who can easily be reformed with a dose of cultural studies. The fact is that we are still struggling today with the meaning of the shift away from all-male education that took place 150 years ago, and at this point we have not foregrounded gender issues equally for men and women. The feminism within and the feminization of composition pedagogy that have become such powerful parts of composition studies today have not yet made much room for male students—or male teachers. (*College English* 58 [1996]: 156)

Connors wrote chapters for many books, such as the theoretically sophisticated and subtle "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology," which appears in Pat Sullivan and Gesa Kirsch's *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. He was an invited speaker at the numerous conferences that began to flourish in the 1990s, among them *Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change*. At this WPA conference featuring the field's movers and shapers, Connors delivered a prescient plenary speech, "The Abolition Debate: A Short History," establishing that "Today's abolitionists are arguing from their scholarly as well as their practical knowledge of writing issues that students are not well served by the required freshman course as they could be by other kinds of writing instruction." With Andrea Lunsford, Connors wrote a major textbook, *The St. Martin's Handbook*, which represents his

continuing legacy to the composition classroom.

The centerpiece of Connors' legacy to the profession is his major book, *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, a volume dedicated to restoring the nineteenth century to rhetorical history—a period hitherto slighted when not ignored altogether. Connors concentrates on “the rhetoric of written composition that arose in American colleges after 1780 and . . . its development as a culture, a theoretical apparatus, and a teaching practice down to relatively recent times.” His methodology is Gibraltar-solid. He draws on an ingenious and eclectic mix of primary documents (letters, histories, treatises, textbooks), and an “economic, political, and theoretical” knowledge of the history of rhetoric from classical times to the present. Connors takes nothing for granted, exploding such pervasive concepts as “current-traditional rhetoric”: “What we have reified as a unified ‘current-traditional rhetoric’ is, in reality, not a unified or an unchanging phenomenon.” Its default label, invented by Daniel Fogarty in 1959 and promulgated by Richard Young in 1978, is inaccurate as well. In this book, as elsewhere, Connors shores up his claims with evidence presented with such offhand grace that the wealth of scholarly underpinning is unobtrusive. Like many of the best writers in composition studies (or anywhere), Connors has the ability to express complex ideas with simple clarity; what readers see is the elegant superstructure that in some ways overshadows the complicated and massive support that is solidly in place.

Connors learned from the best of mentors, Ed Corbett, and continued to learn from and teach with a wealth of colleagues and students not only at the University of New Hampshire but throughout the country. Portions of his “Memorial Tribute” to Corbett published in *College English* could, with a few revisions, be applied to Connors himself. But, punctilious as Connors was about keeping most deadlines, there is one he kept too early, too soon. I wish we could say some thirty years from now that, like Corbett, Bob Connors “lived to see his family thrive, and to see the children of his mind lead the field that so many credited him with helping build.” Cut down in his prime, Bob did not live to see his young family thrive. That the children of his mind lead the field, as they have done for twenty years, is a claim we can make, in certainty and in sorrow. The canon is eclectic and expansive. Bob Connors' larger-than-life presence helped that canon—and all of us—to grow.

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Masculinity, Feminism, and Motorcycles: Memorial Reflections

Elizabeth A. Flynn

The cycle swings into each curve effortlessly, banking so that our weight is always down through the machine no matter what its angle is with the ground. The way is full of flowers and surprise views, tight turns one after another so that the whole world rolls and pirouettes and rises and falls away.

—Robert Pirsig

Most of the sight lines along the mile-long strength of Route 5 that I walk are good, but there is one place, a short steep hill, where a pedestrian heading north can see very little of what might be coming his way. I was three-quarters of the way up this hill when the van came over the crest. It wasn't on the road; it was on the shoulder. My shoulder. I had perhaps three-quarters of a second to register this. It was time enough to think, My God, I'm going to be hit by a school bus, and to start to turn to my left. Then there is a break in my memory. On the other side of it, I'm on the ground, looking at the back of the van, which is now pulled off the road and tilted to one side. This image is clear and sharp, more like a snapshot than like a memory. There is dust around the van's tail-lights. The license plate and the back window are dirty. I register these things with no thought of myself or of my condition. I'm simply not thinking.

—Stephen King

Bob Connors and I were graduate students together at Ohio State University in the 1970s. I finished coursework before he started his and then spent two years in Europe, so we didn't meet up until the mid-1970s. But we were both involved in the composition program when I returned, so our paths crossed from time to time. My most distinct memory of an association with him during this period was our being paired up in a workshop focusing on pedagogical issues in which we wrote an on-the-spot collaborative piece. I realized then that he was both an assertive and a skilled writer. I also had a sense when we were at Ohio State that he had clear priorities: he was a scholar first.

I was not surprised, then, that as soon as he obtained a tenure-track position he started publishing immediately and within a few years had