

For Immediate Release
Contact: Stephen Dickey
smd@ku.edu
(785) 864-9250

Lawrence, KS, March 18, 2016 - It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Professor Emeritus Stephen J. Parker on Monday, March 14, 2016.

Prof. Parker was the third chair of KU Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures and served for 13 years, stepping down in 2000. He is also the donor and namesake of the Parker Slavic Library, located in Wescoe Hall.

“Stephen was always cheerful and gracious, and was respected and beloved by colleagues and students alike,” says Professor Stephen Dickey, current chair of the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures. “For me, he was almost synonymous with the department since my days as a student, and one of my earliest memories is of the charismatic professor with a pipe at social functions.”

Prof. Marc Greenberg, Director of the School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, and former chair of the Slavic Department, echoes gratitude for Prof. Parker’s contributions to the Department, and reflects on their long friendship: “Steve was so generous to the Slavic Department, its faculty, and students, in donating his mother's (Prof. Fan Parker) and his comprehensive collection of Russian literary works, as well as funds to build the Parker Slavic Library. I will always be grateful to him for hiring me at KU and thus opening up the opportunity for me to work in Slavic scholarship and for his both collegial and caring relationship to me as a junior faculty member. I was honored to have enjoyed Steve's collegiality and friendship for some 25 years.”

Professor Emerita Maria Carlson adds that she “will always remember Steve as a role model for good leadership, and will miss his wise advice, his ready smile, and his dry wit.”

Prof. Stephen J. Parker is survived by his spouse, Prof. Emerita Marie-Luce Parker, a scholar of French, and former chair of the Department of Modern Languages at Washburn University.

Stephen Parker earned his Ph.D. from Cornell U. in Russian Literature under advisor George Gibian, with a dissertation on *Vladimir Nabokov-Sirin as Teacher: The Russian Novels*. After a brief appointment at the University of Oklahoma at Norman, he was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures at KU in 1967. He served as chair of the Slavic Department from 1987 to 2000, retiring in 2011. His book *Understanding Vladimir Nabokov* (U of South Carolina Press, 1987) was reprinted and often used as a course text. He co-authored *Russia on Canvas: Ilya Repin* (Pennsylvania State University Press) with his mother, Fan Parker. He published numerous scholarly articles and essays.

The passing of Professor Stephen J. Parker signals the end of an era in the Slavic Department at KU. As chair for many years, Parker saw SLL through enormous changes in our profession and met the enormous challenge of rebuilding the department. This he did with fairness, sensitivity, and grace. He was a supportive, light-handed mentor to many. His commitment to the department and to KU was profound, and his many contributions touched lives from the classroom to administrative offices to the KU athletics program, where he volunteered as a mentor for many years. We are honored by his contributions to the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures and the University of Kansas. We will miss him deeply.

Online condolences may be sent to www.warrenmcelwain.com.