

I knew Jack as a mentor. He wrote a letter for my first fellowship application, even though he had never met, much less heard of me. Jack was always generous to other scholars when it came to reading their work and sharing his own ideas. He was especially kind to younger scholars. I probably served with Jack on more panels at meetings than with anyone else. I never knew what he would say in an introduction or in a comment—he was after all, unpredictable, a bit of a contrarian, and subject to mischief. I did know that he would always calm an anxious younger scholar or graduate student with a witty introduction, or an insightful, often playful, comment.

Jack was a superb scholar who did not simply write about the South, he enjoyed the finer points of its culture—it's food, wine, music, folklore, and storytelling—something that he reveled in himself. He lived life to its fullest.

The last time we spoke, was illustrative of my encounters with him. I had called him on one of those horrible winter mornings that the Northeast is known for—it was freezing cold and gray and I thought that spring would never come again. Jack answered the phone and immediately began to tell me how beautiful the Ocean had been that morning, how enchanting the flora and the fauna were, and how lovely the birds had sung. In fact, he listened to a mockingbird as we spoke. He was so happy and enthusiastic about the world around him, that he made me forget where I was. After I hung up the phone, I had decided that life was not so bad after all—at least Jack was in a place where the Mockingbird sang and the flowers actually bloomed, even in March.

I will remember Jack for his kindness, generosity, independent spirit, his wide ranging interests, and his outrageous stories. I admired his scholarship immensely—for its originality, for his beautiful prose, for his wit, and for his passion for the people and places that he wrote about. We will miss him greatly.

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