

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION ALFRED H. GROMMON

(1911-2001)

Alfred H. Grommon, Professor Emeritus of Education and English, died at the Sequoias, Portola Valley, on March 17, 2001 at the age of 90. A native of Utica, New York, he earned all of his academic degrees at Cornell University: A.B. in English (1933), M.A. in American Literature (1940), and Ph.D. in American Literature (1943). After receiving his baccalaureate degree he began teaching English in upstate New York secondary schools. In 1935, he married a fellow-teacher, Helen McCurdy. Throughout their long life together they shared strong interests in American history and literature.

While serving as chairman of the English Department at Ithaca High School and completing his doctoral dissertation on the poet James Russell Lowell, Alfred Grommon was also an instructor at Cornell in the English Department and the School of Education. Thus, he embarked on a distinguished career of more than thirty years in which he focused on improving the quality of preparation of teachers of English for both the secondary and collegiate levels.

In 1945 he was named Assistant Professor of Education and English at Stanford. The joint appointment resulted from the desire of both units to improve the way in which future teachers of English were prepared for their profession. In his early years at Stanford, besides teaching and supervising student teaching in the School of Education, he taught freshman writing as well as courses in nineteenth-century American literature for the Department of English. From 1948 to 1950 he also served as the university's Director of Undergraduate Admissions. Then, for six years, until 1956, he directed the Stanford Freshman English Program, while still continuing to offer his other courses in literature and education.

From the beginning, Al Grommon was active in professional organizations in the field of English and in contributing to and editing publications. As a member of the National Council of Teachers of English he served on the Commission on the English curriculum and as a member of the NCTE Advisory Council before becoming President of the organization in 1966. He also served on various California commissions on the English curriculum and as President of the California Association of English Councils. In the mid-1970s he was the lead person for writing the English language arts framework for k-12 education in California, which was used as a teacher's guide. It was a major factor in the types of state-adopted k-12 textbooks.

Besides publishing articles in professional journals Professor Grommon contributed to and edited a number of books, beginning with Continuity in Liberal Education in High School and College (1957). Others included The Education of Teachers of English for American Schools and College (1961) and three literary anthologies for schools: Wide, Wide World (1959), All Around America (1959) and Vanguard (1961).

Over the years Professor Grommon supervised hundreds of graduate students in the School of Education and served on thesis and dissertation committees both there and in the

Department of English. He also taught at Stanford Overseas campuses, twice at Tours and once at Florence. During the 1960s he directed seminars designed to bring experienced secondary school teachers abreast of recent developments in the field of English. He taught these on the home campus, and, once, in Austria for teachers of American students in European and other overseas schools.

Alfred Grommon was an enthusiastic supporter of Stanford athletics. A talented baseball pitcher himself, he attended varsity games faithfully at the Sunken Diamond, and he and his wife maintained their season tickets at men's basketball games for many years. He was an excellent friend and colleague and a devoted friend and mentor of the many future teachers whom he supervised. He and his wife, Helen, cordially welcomed new faculty from throughout the University. Always lively and congenial in conversation, he was a talented raconteur, but also an outrageous punster. He retired from Stanford in 1975.

He is survived by Helen Grommon, his wife for sixty-five years, and by a nephew, Stephen Murtaugh, of Clarence, New York.

Committee:
Lawrence V. Ryan
James Lowell Gibbs, Jr.