

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

RAYMOND DAVIS HARRIMAN (1888 – 1972)

Raymond Davis Harriman, Professor Emeritus of Classics, died on May 31st, 1972 in Los Gatos. He was in his 84th year and had been a member of the Stanford faculty since 1928. For the past few years he and Mrs. Harriman had lived in Los Gatos, to be near their son and his family, but for ten years after his retirement they lived on the campus, on Alvarado Row, and Raymond maintained close connection with members of the Classics Department and his numerous other friends in various sections of the University. He will be greatly missed by all of us who had grown so fond of him during the many years that we had known him at Stanford.

He was born in Grinnell, Iowa, and attended Grinnell College, receiving his A.B. in 1909. Although his entire teaching career was spent in the West, he remained in touch with his old college, receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters there in 1959; it was a source of pride to him that one of his Stanford pupils became Professor of Classics at Grinnell.

After a few years of high school teaching in Muscatine, Iowa, he went to the University of Wisconsin to continue his classical studies. His special interest in Indo-European linguistics was combined with an interest in Roman history, and he was Fellow in Latin and Assistant in Ancient History in successive years. He obtained his Ph.D. from Wisconsin in 1915, and spent the next year in Rome as a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, before joining the faculty of the University of Utah as Instructor in Ancient Languages. He remained for twelve years at Utah, becoming Associate Professor in 1922 and serving as Dean of Men in 1926-28. He came to Stanford in 1928 as Associate Professor, joining the group of scholars who had constituted the Classics Department since the very early days of Stanford: Elmore, Fairclough, Foster, Martin, and Murray. He became a full professor in 1934, and was Chairman of the Department from 1937 until his retirement in 1953.

His special contribution to the department was his interest in Roman history and historical linguistics. But he also helped students to discover that study of the classics was a way of learning to understand and appreciate great works of literature, that more was expected of a serious student and a good teacher than the ability to translate difficult passages correctly. Even in the 1930s there was a shortage of undergraduates who wanted to make Latin or Greek their major subject, and he was insistent that the work of the department must appeal to others besides devoted classicists. He was convinced that the small number and the poor performance of the majority who struggled willingly or unwillingly with Latin was due to the uninspired and antiquated method of teaching to which they had been subjected. He also believed very firmly that the University had an obligation to provide good instruction at the elementary level in Latin, not only for those with a special interest in languages, but for all students; and he developed an individual style in teaching, in which he drew attention to the relation between languages and such phenomena as linguistic change. He expected students to see that if pater corresponded to English father, then a Latin word like patens, meaning "wide open," corresponded to - what?

And he would stretch his arms out sideways waiting for someone to say "fathom." When the University language requirement was still in force, he was able to persuade many engineering students (and their advisers) that it was worth their while to meet the requirement by studying Latin. These students did not become classical scholars, but they learned all kinds of things about language and languages (including English) that no language laboratory or "program" would ever teach them.

His concern for good teaching was not limited to the University. He was elected to the Palo Alto Board of Education in 1945, and during five years of service did his best to ensure that so-called "fundamental" subjects were well taught in the schools. Many teachers knew him and had the highest regard for him.

During the Second World War he became greatly interested in officer training programs at universities. He received a commendation from the War Department for his outstanding work as civilian adviser in helping to organize a Special Training and Reclassification Group at Stanford, and continued as Coordinator of Military Programs at Stanford until his retirement.

He was deeply involved in administrative work here. He served several terms as a member of the Advisory Board, the Executive Committee of the Academic Council, the Lower Division Committee and the Graduate Study Committee, and was Acting Dean in the School of Humanities in 1947-48; he was also on committees concerned with Foreign Students (1944-53), Veterans' Education (1945-49), Teacher Education (1947-53), and Scholarships (1946-53). He was a faithful and active member of the Stanford Philological Association and the Stanford Research Club, and became President of the Classical Association of the Pacific States (1948) and of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast (1945). He also taught in summer sessions at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin, and spent a year as Visiting Assistant Professor at Chicago (1925-26) and as Visiting Professor at the University of Washington (1953-54).

Raymond Harriman was devoted to his students and his colleagues; he was a man on whom they could rely as counselor and friend. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ruth Harriman, a son and a daughter, and six grandchildren. To all of them we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

Lionel Pearson, Chairman
Mark W. Edwards
Virgil K. Whitaker