

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

RICHARD FOSTER JONES (1886 – 1965)

Richard Foster Jones, Professor Emeritus and former Executive Head of the Stanford University Department of English, died of pneumonia on September 12, 1965.

Professor Jones retired from teaching in 1952; and yet he cannot be said ever to have retired either from Stanford or from the scholarly life. He remained a lively member of the university community, he kept the closest contacts with colleagues and friends, and he continued to publish, and re-publish, the scholarly works that made him a reputation as one of the most distinguished historians of 17th and 18th century ideas, especially the beginnings of experimental sciences. The long illness which clouded his last year with pain forced him home, not from soft retirement, but from the British Museum, where he was continuing the research that had occupied him most of his life. The latest of many reprints of his books, which he had looked forward to seeing, arrived only two days after his death.

For R. F. Jones, the truest life was the scholarly life, the truest society the society of intelligence and learning, and he lived the life and shared the society for all his 79 years. He was born in Salado, Texas, on July 7, 1886, the son of a distinguished Texas educator. From his father's school he went on to the University of Texas (A.B. 1907) and to Columbia University (A.M. 1910, Ph.D. 1918). After a teaching apprenticeship at Western Reserve and Columbia in 1919, he joined the faculty of Washington University in St. Louis, ending his service there in 1945 as Dean of the Graduate School.

Though Professor Jones's active association with Stanford filled only the last seven years of his teaching career, it was to Stanford that he gave his full loyalty. Appropriately, his name was built into Stanford many years before his death. The Jones Room, a reading and meeting room for creative writing students, is named jointly for Professor Jones and his brother, the late E. H. Jones. The generosity of E. H. Jones provided the money to establish the creative writing program; the enthusiasm and support of R. F., not only while he headed the English Department but afterward, sustained it.

What the world loses when a true scholar dies is only a man. The name, as in R. F.'s case, is somehow commemorated: and the scholar, as also in R. F.'s case, lives on in his books, especially in the indispensable Ancients and Moderns, which was reissued by Washington University Press in 1961, The Triumph of the English Language, published by the Stanford University Press in 1952, and the Festschrift The Seventeenth Century, also by the Stanford University Press, in 1951, and reissued in 1965.

Only the man dies--but the sort of man the world and the university can least afford to lose: a warm man, with a great gusto for ideas, people, life; a man naturally courteous and incorrigibly generous; a man of the highest principles and the highest integrity, who could hold his principles without rigidity and with a compassionate understanding of human error. These are no longer to be known and respected and loved in the flesh. But their memory and influence,

surely, lasts in scores and hundreds of former students and colleagues, and that is where R. F. himself would most want to be kept--in the minds and characters of his friends.

Wallace Stegner, Chairman
Sandor Salgo
Virgil K. Whitaker