

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### KURT FRANK REINHARDT (1896 – 1983)

Kurt Frank Reinhardt, Professor Emeritus of German, died in his home in Palo Alto on June 13, 1983. He was a native of Munich, Germany, where he was born on November 6, 1896. As a member of the Department of Modern European Languages and of the German Studies Department, Professor Reinhardt taught at Stanford from 1930 until 1962, and after his retirement until 1965. He was also a professor at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park until 1980. Professor Reinhardt was a renowned scholar whose publications in the fields of German studies, philosophy, and cultural history gained him an international reputation. Many generations of students at Stanford received inspiration and encouragement from him at a time when the humanities at this institution did not always receive their due respect and attention.

Kurt F. Reinhardt attended a classical High School in Mannheim and subsequently studied literature, philosophy, and art history at the Universities of Munich, Heidelberg, and Freiburg. The teachers to whom he ascribed the greatest importance for his career include the literary critic and poet Friedrich Gundolf, and the Neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert, whose courses on the methodology of the humanities and theory of values he particularly cherished. With Karl Jaspers he studied psychology, with Heinrich Woelflin art history and with Fritz Strich and Arthur Kutscher literary history and modern drama. He completed his studies at Freiburg, where he could pursue a new major: comparative literature. In Freiburg he met the philosopher Edmund Husserl and made the acquaintance of one of his students, Herbert Marcuse. His doctoral dissertation, Mysticism And Pietism (1922) became his first book publication in 1925.

During the first World War Kurt Reinhardt worked in Munich as a dramaturg for the famous theater company Kammerspiele and had contact with many German writers and artists, such as Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Ernst Toller and others. At the end of the war it was discovered that he suffered from tuberculosis, and he had to spend several years in a sanatorium in Switzerland. It was here that he converted to Catholicism, an event that was to shape the remainder of his life. In 1925 he began working as an editor for the publishing house of Herder in Freiburg, where he was responsible for the editorial work on the Herder Encyclopaedia. Three years later he moved to Zurich, Switzerland, as the editor-in-chief of a newly founded progressive Catholic weekly named, after his suggestion, Der Feuerreiter. In 1927 he and his Swiss wife moved to Canada where Dr. Reinhardt intended to join a utopian settlement while also working as a correspondent for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and other well known European papers. The utopian settlement turned out to be a land scam and Dr. Reinhardt decided to move back into academic life. Between 1928 and 1930 he taught German Literature and Art History at the University of Oregon at Eugene, and in 1930 he accepted a teaching position at Stanford. At Stanford Professor Reinhardt taught courses in German civilization, literary history and criticism, comparative literature, European mysticism and philosophy. Professor Reinhardt wrote the first book in English on existentialism, The Existentialist Revolt, (1952, 2nd. ed. 1960). His two-volume history of German civilization, Germany: 2000 Years, (1950f.) is still

widely read and regarded as the standard work on the subject in English. His book A Realistic Philosophy, first published in 1944, contains his own views as he developed them from the principles of the philosophia perennis. Besides several studies on medieval mysticism and translations into English from the Spanish (Unamuno, St. John of the Cross) and the German (psychology, philosophy), Professor Reinhardt also published a book on the Theological Novel of Modern Europe (1969).

Professor Reinhardt shunned publicity and was suspicious of anything or anybody who trivialized the idea of the university and education. Through his teaching and writing he set an example to his students and colleagues never to forget the true vocation of a teacher and scholar in the day-to-day business and policy making of the institution. Professor Reinhardt was probably at his best when he worked with a very small group of graduate or undergraduate students, although his lecture courses often attracted well over 100 students. After his retirement, he often received former students and friends at his home at Channing House in Palo Alto where ideas were exchanged and problems discussed in a warm-hearted and stimulating atmosphere. Until his very last days, Professor Reinhardt stayed intellectually active and continued working on his projects. He will be remembered by many friends and former students here and abroad.

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