

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION LUCIO RUOTOLO, Ph.D.

(1927-2003)

Lucio Ruotolo, a professor emeritus of English, died July 4, 2003, at Stanford Hospital, of complications following heart surgery. He was 76.

Ruotolo was born in New York City on March 14, 1927, of immigrant parents, a Viennese mother and an Italian father. His father, Onorio, was a well-known sculptor who made busts of such eminent figures as Thomas Edison, Theodore Dreiser, and Helen Keller. Ruotolo had completed a biographical memoir of his father when he died. An only child, he grew up among his parents' Bohemian entourage. His kindergarten teacher was Jackson Pollock, and one of the family's closest friends was the painter Thomas Hart Benton.

Having served in the Army Air Corps from 1945 to 1947, Ruotolo then went to Colgate University where he received his B.A. in 1951. He received his M.A. in 1954 and his PhD in 1960 at Columbia University, where he was a student of Marjorie Hope Nicholson, a well-known scholar of English literature. After holding part-time positions at Hofstra College and the New School for Social Research, he came to Stanford in 1957.

Ruotolo was a preeminent scholar of Virginia Woolf, whom he helped to establish as one the great writers of the twentieth-century. He was a founding editor of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* in 1973 and a founding member of The Virginia Woolf Society in 1975. He published in 1986 *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels*; he edited several of her unpublished manuscripts, including her play *Freshwater*; and he was the author of many articles and reviews relating to her .

His first book, based in part on his dissertation, *Six Existential Heroes: The Politics of Faith*, contained a chapter on Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. A long-time friend recalls that he was pressured to exclude Woolf from the book because she was the only woman in the study and not highly regarded, but Ruotolo refused to back down. He even had to change his publisher in order to stick to his principles. The book won the Thomas J. Wilson Memorial Prize, awarded by the Harvard Board of Syndics.

Ruotolo's scholarly interests were wide-ranging. He was film editor of *Christianity and Crisis* in 1965-1966 and remained interested in film for the rest of his life. The romantic poets also remained one of his passions. At the time of his death he had returned to his study of the history and intellectual foundations of anarchism and was writing a book on the impact of anarchism on the literature of western culture.

Ruotolo was an excellent teacher. A former graduate student recalled his style in a Woolf Seminar: "how he would nod, considering, murmuring, listening, then gathering momentum, launch into his own thought-which could turn in a moment to laughter. Could anyone else laugh at himself with such knowing self-irony?" Another former student recalls Ruotolo's course on Woolf as a "great eye-opening experience." He "had a light and human

touch. There is a graciousness to the way he was personally and the way he, in a very nuanced way, read Woolf's work."

His interest in existential philosophy as an instrument of change found its analogue in his politics. A life-long liberal, he protested against the Vietnam War and was chairman of the Stanford-Palo Alto Democratic Club in 1968, the year in which he supported Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. He often expressed his disgust with every aspect of the present administration.

One of Rutolo's great passions was baseball. When he was in the air force, he was stationed in Illinois and often took the bus to St. Louis to see the Cardinals play. But his undying loyalty was to the Giants, first in New York at the Polo Grounds and then in San Francisco when the team moved west. He was a season ticket holder, first at Candlestick and then at Pac Bell Park. His cheering was interrupted only long enough to keep score, and he saved all of his score cards. A vociferous fan, his enthusiasm was contagious.

Lucio Ruotolo is survived by his wife of 43 years, Marcia Mauney Ruotolo, three children-Cristina of El Cerrito, Vanessa of San Francisco, and Peter of Dublin, Ireland-and one granddaughter. His family and friends remember him as a man of great generosity and a passion for life.

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Committee:

Bliss Carnochan  
Ronald Rebholz