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Arlin Turner

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Arlin Turner 1909-1980

American literary scholarship suffered a great loss with the death of Arlin Turner on April 24, 1980. This man's career was distinguished, providing a model of a first rate scholar who was simultaneously a great human being. His study under Killis Campbell, at the University of Texas, Austin, during the late 1920's and early 30's, securely grounded Arlin in scholarly method; thence he went on into academic teaching and scholarship at Louisiana State University and from there to Duke University. At the latter institution he ultimately held a James B. Duke Chair and became Editor of *American Literature*, a meet position for the successor in southern literary studies to Jay B. Hubbell, founding editor of that famous journal, the first devoted exclusively to our national literature. Arlin also held visiting professorships in many other corners of the world.

Professor Turner's influence was widely felt through his students, who specialized in diverse fields. Whether the concentration was in southwestern humor, civil-war correspondence relevant to the Whitmans, or the novel of puritanism, in Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, or Caroline Gordon, a candidate's dissertation came away the better for Arlin's careful reading, shrewd criticism, and kind advice. The recent *Festschrift* honoring him reveals his far-ranging authority in American literary topics, both as regards supervised dissertations and his own widespread research and publications. Naturally his work with Campbell resulted in early studies of Poe, and Arlin's last professional address concerned the Hawthorne-Poe relationship. Other interests led to the standard biography of G. W. Cable, which elicited plaudits from hard-to-please critics; a fifty-year fascination with the life and writings of Hawthorne culminated in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography*, brought out by Oxford University Press early in 1980. It surpasses previous biographies of the New England writer, and it stands as a magnificent capstone to an impressive scholarly career.

In the Fall of 1979, when *UMSE* was being revamped, Arlin was invited to serve on the advisory board. He responded that he would indeed assume those responsibilities, adding that he was "pleased and honored" to do so and that he would assist in any other way. Such courtesy was customary in this man. He went on to evaluate several manuscripts, each receiving thoughtful treatment. He would be pleased to know that a former student is represented among contributors to the present issue, as he was to learn that one would act as Editor and others would serve as evaluators. We shall miss his wise, generous counsel.

ARLIN TURNER

Overall, Arlin Turner's name will not be speedily forgotten in the realms of American Literature. That he completed two substantial books, one on Cable, another on Hawthorne, in the months immediately preceding his death; that he continued to attend professional meetings, to write shorter scholarly studies, and to teach and advise those in need, typifies one about whom the words of an old American hymn are characteristic:

Memories all too bright for tears
Crowd around us from the past.
He was faithful to the last,
Faithful through long, toilsome years.

B.F.F.IV