

THOMAS McLEOD BADER

(1935-2012)

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Well, he had a great voyage. Dr. Thomas McLeod Bader (1935-2012), CSUN Professor Emeritus of History, and Captain, U.S. Coast Guard. A great journey. Most with Carol as first, and only, mate in a half century of marriage. And with a lot of awed, inspired crew and passengers along, immeasurably enriched by and enjoying the experience with him, in both smooth and rough waters. He always got us to our destination. Every time. Even until his passing 30 May 2012, after a long bout with skin cancer, he was still at his position on the bridge, doing his duty, bringing the ship home. Cheered on by Carol, sons Tom and Ned, daughter Barbara, and their families, as well as innumerable admirers in and out of the historical profession. Only fitting therefore that after a memorial service in his Cambria Catholic parish church, the Coast Guard returned his ashes to the sea he loved at Morro Bay.

In between that poignant ceremony and young Bader's move with widowed mother and both brothers from Atlantic City New Jersey to Southern California in 1946, Bader ably led and logged a lot of missions. As athlete and scholar, he earned a B.A. at Pomona College in 1956, enjoyed a promising half year as an industrial engineer at North American Aviation, then headed off to the Coast Guard Academy's Officer Candidate School at New London, Connecticut, in 1957 and several years of blue-water service in the Pacific, before returning to the Academy as history instructor and track coach...and marrying the University of Michigan nurse he had courted in Hawaii. The ensuing years of Coast Guard drug interdiction and rescue service in the Pacific, graduate military study at such institutions as the Naval War College, the National War College, and the Armed Forces Staff College, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from UCLA in study with Bob Burr, Lynn White, and John Galbraith, prepared him well to join the San Fernando Valley State College in 1964. Perhaps because of his subsequent study at Chile's Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies and teaching appointments at UCLA, Australia's University of New England, and the American Institute for Foreign Study/CSUN London semester compelled Bader to remind his Latin Americanist colleagues in the CSUN History Department, senior and junior alike, that Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil were not the only states in Latin America. That "world as it really is" seasoning also superbly equipped him to publish

internationally and offer courses at CSUN that ranged from gold fleets and trade relations between Chile and Australia, 1830-1860, the intellectual history of Latin America, the histories of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, and the historical relationships between them and other parts of the British Commonwealth as well as Latin America. His History 303: "Themes in the History of Western Civilization to 1500" was a big hit with his students until his retirement in 2001. A cosmopolitan, sophisticated historian indeed! His student admirers were legion. And thus Bader's receipt of the CSUN "Distinguished Teaching Award" in 1986 was no surprise to any.

But in his 37 years in the History Department, Bader's multiple talents also got him drafted into various administrative assignments, including the chairmanship of the History Department and acting Dean of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences. Neither is an easy assignment when university administration has a set of priorities quite distinct from that of the faculty. But no small satisfaction comes from doing one's duty there, as in the classroom, Bader would gleefully concede with his inimitable Irish smile and wit.

While each of Bader's colleagues will remember and appreciate the different ways he so devotedly served the profession and the History Department, one junior colleague will recall being assigned as Bader's office mate the very first day of arrival on campus in 1968. That was an experience. The poised, physically intimidating Bader required proper procedures, protocol, and civility in all settings, which meant learning the first day the Coast Guard salute, which differently subtly it seemed from the U.S. Army salute. And, when shuttled to another office as the Department faculty expanded rapidly, being subject to the "white glove" test whenever Captain Bader visited and ran his fingers along the top of the door jam and retrieved dust which this junior college could neither see nor reach, much to Bader's amusement. The message was clear: things are to be done right around here. That's something Bader always expected, but, fortunately he was no less gracious, collegial, and supportive of his junior, as well as senior colleagues, and students. He was, in short, an incomparable tutor and friend, and one of the reasons a professional career in History at CSUN was so rewarding and satisfying an experience. And so many students are indebted for life to Bader's positive, stimulating influence.

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