

DR. CHARLES A. BRADY, A MULTI-TALENTED MAN

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 1995

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, western New Yorkers and the Canisius College community in Buffalo this weekend mourned the passing of Dr. Charles A. Brady, former head of the college's English Department author and literary critic for the Buffalo News for more than half a century.

Dr. Brady was an extremely talented, multifaceted person, as evidenced by the Buffalo News' obituary, which described him as: "A professor, poet, novelist, critic and caricaturist * * *."

In addition to his voluminous literary creations, Dr. Brady will also be remembered fondly by the many generations of Canisius' alumni, like me, who were taught and influenced by him.

Following are his obituary which appeared in the Buffalo News, and an insightful article by Jeff Simon, the News' book editor, which appeared in the paper May 9 and headlined: "A Man of Letters, but Even More, a Man of Life."

CHARLES A. BRADY DIES; CANISIUS PROF., AUTHOR, LITERARY CRITIC FOR NEWS WAS 83

Charles A. Brady, former head of the English Department at Canisius College, author and literary critic for The Buffalo News for five decades, died Friday (May 5, 1995) in Sisters Hospital, following a long illness.

A professor, poet, novelist, critic and caricaturist, Brady had used both pen and wit to illuminate even the darkest recesses of literature for three generations of Western New Yorkers. He was 83.

Brady, who was born April 15, 1912, often pointed out that he was born "the day, the hour and the moment that the Titanic sank."

It was that coincidence, he said, that gave him his "bent for epic things."

For more than 50 years, Brady served as an intellectual beacon to students and residents of the Buffalo area and beyond, contributing to and interpreting the literary scene both here and abroad.

A man of enormous enthusiasm and dauntless energy, Brady since childhood defied a serious heart condition and pursued an active life, often from his bedside at home, or in the hospital.

Brady wrote four novels. One of them, "Stage of Fools: A Novel of Sir Thomas More," outsold any book published by E. P. Dutton in 1953. It was translated into Dutch and Spanish and printed in paperback as well as hard cover.

In 1968, the Poetry Society of America gave first prize to Brady's "Keeper of the Western Gate" and, in 1970, its Cecil Hemley Memorial Award for the best poem on a philosophical theme, "Ecce Homo Ludens."

C.S. Lewis, the eminent British author, once called Brady's critique of his work the best published in Great Britain and the United States.

Brady's literary output was voluminous—from novels, short stories, poems, children's stories, holiday "fantasies," to critical essays and book reviews. Throughout his work ran the deep vein of history.

Son of Andrew J. Brady Sr., a former lumberman who owned freighters on the Great Lakes, and Belinda Dowd of Black Rock, Brady's commitment to literature began at

Canisius College, which he attended after graduating from Canisius High School in 1929. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Canisius in 1933.

During those years, he also played championship tennis and, in the spring of 1987, was named to the Canisius College All Sports Hall of Fame for his undergraduate tennis prowess.

He received a master of arts degree in English from Harvard University and then returned to Canisius at age 23 as an associate professor of English.

A year later, he was promoted to professor and chairman of the English Department, a position he held until 1959, when he continued his professorship until retirement in 1977.

In his more than 40 years at the college, he touched and helped mold the tastes and lives of thousands of students and graduate students, many from other colleges or universities, who also attended his courses or sought his counsel.

The AZUWUR, the Canisius College yearbook, was dedicated to Brady in 1956 and again in 1976.

From 1938 to 1941, Brady directed Canisius College's graduate division, and during World War II, in addition to his English classes, he taught the classics, French, military geography and Renaissance history.

Academically, Brady probably was best known for his lectures and critical studies of Cooper, Marquand, Sigrid Undset, Charles Williams, the Volsunga Saga, John Le Carre and C.S. Lewis. His studies on J.R.R. Tolkien and, more especially, Lewis, have been cited as "definitive in this country."

Copies of Lewis' original letters to Brady, embracing a correspondence that the British author initiated and that continued over a number of years, are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University.

In addition to "Stage of Fools," Brady's works include "Viking Summer," which combined Norse legend with a present-day Niagara Frontier setting; "This Land Fulfilled" and "Crown of Grass," both historical novels; "Wings Over Patmos," a book of verse; and "A Catholic Reader," a personalized anthology.

For children, he wrote "Cat Royal," "The Elephant Who Wanted to Pray," "The Church Mouse of St. Nicholas" and "Sir Thomas More of London Town." For older children, he wrote "Sword of Clontart" and "The King's Thane."

A short story, "The Foot That Went Too Far," which he had written as an undergraduate, was the origin of the griffin as the Canisius College mascot.

The capstone of his career at Canisius was writing the college's centenary history, "Canisius College: The First Hundred Years." Written over almost five years, the book, unlike most school histories, was done in an impressionistic style, capturing the spirit of the college as well as that of the Niagara Frontier.

Brady wrote for national and international journals, and reviewed books for other major publications, such as The New York Times, the old Herald Tribune, America, Commonweal and the Catholic World.

A man of many talents, including some musical composition, Brady enjoyed drawing line caricatures of authors, many of which were used to illustrate his critical essays and book reviews for The News. His last book review and drawing for The News was printed March 12.

In September 1986, the Burchfield Center at Buffalo State College exhibited his literary caricatures in a one-man show.

A familiar figure on the lecture platform, Brady held the Candlemas Lectureship at

Boston College and gave Notre Dame's Summer Lectures in the humanities.

The News named him "an outstanding citizen" in 1970.

He was the recipient of the Canisius College LaSalle Medal, the highest honor awarded to an alumnus. In 1970, the Canisius Alumni Association presented him with its Peter Canisius Medal for his "scholarly brilliance and teaching excellence that inspired and informed legions of Canisius students."

A longtime resident of the Town of Tonawanda, he moved to Buffalo's Delaware District in the early 1990s.

Brady is survived by his wife of 57 years, the former Mary Eileen Larson; four daughters, Karen Brady Borland and Moira Brady Roberts, both of Buffalo, Sheila Brady Nair of New Bethlehem, Pa., and Kristin M. of London, Ont.; two sons, Erik L. of Arlington, Va., and Kevin C. of Buffalo and 17 grandchildren.

Prayers at 11 a.m. Monday in the George J. Roberts & Sons Funeral Home, 2400 Main St., will precede a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:30 a.m. in Christ the King Chapel at Canisius College, 2001 Main St. Burial will be in Mount Olivet Cemetery in the Town of Tonawanda.

A MAN OF LETTERS, BUT EVEN MORE, A MAN OF LIFE

Charles Brady died on Friday afternoon at age 83. His loss to The News' book pages is virtually incalculable. If it isn't precisely accurate to say that Charles A. Brady invented literary reviewing at The Buffalo News, it's certainly close enough to the truth to pass. He was a treasured literary voice here in five separate decades.

I've been The News' book editor for six years and was the book assignment editor for six years before that. Editing Dr. Brady and finding books that I knew would stimulate him provided the job's greatest pleasures.

His latest work would appear in my mail every Friday or Monday morning. Inside the envelope—impeccably typed on soft, old-fashioned, khaki-colored copy paper—would be three pages of crystalline prose. Accompanying it, on white paper, would be one of his pen-and-ink caricatures. Even on busy Mondays, I would try to save editing Dr. Brady for the last work of the day—an Edwardian reward of wit, wisdom and uncommon grace for dealing with all the coarse, witless drudgery that almost all work requires, journalism included.

At least half the time, there would be a word or spelling in it that I'd never encountered before—some strange semantic hippogriff that Dr. Brady had captured in his library and uncaged for the delight and enchantment of company.

Typically, I'd walk over to our glorious battery of dictionaries in a state of bafflement or skepticism: Surely, this time, it's a misspelling. And then the huge Random House Dictionary, American Heritage Dictionary and Oxford English Dictionary would set me straight—Dr. Brady's was very much a word, even if its usage or spelling were Victorian or Elizabethan.

It's a walk I'll never make again; it's a smile of marvel and appreciation I won't be smiling anymore.

Every day that goes by brings at least one book that I would automatically send to Dr. Brady in total confidence that it would elicit a smile of complicity on the other end of our discourse-by-mail-and-phone.

No discussion was necessary to pick out "Brady books." I have been reading him since my early teens. I knew what he liked or, failing that, what interested him. That was vastly more than the epics or Celtic

myths or Irish literature or work of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and their fellow Oxford Inklings that people thought of as his special province. It encompassed virtually the whole of English literature, early American literature (James Fenimore Cooper was a Brady specialty; minor Twain was a Brady weakness), all American fictional modernism and, late in life, Yiddish and Jewish literature, for which he developed an entirely unpredictable fondness.

We disagreed strongly on some writers, but he was the sort of man with whom disagreement was one of the friendliest experiences you could have. If he never quite subscribed to all the hoo-ha about Jorge Luis Borges from me and others, he would, with impish geniality, point out how much he liked Anthony Burgess, and what was the name Borges, after all, but the Spanish version of Burgess?

It's also true, I think, that he was doing some of the best journalistic work of his life in his final decade. In the place of earlier reviews that could sometimes be constricted by myth (it's tempting to call such prose "myth-begotten" and hope he'd approve), his work in the past decade was informed by marvelous wit, total scholarship and a glorious new clarity. I could delude myself into thinking that our unspoken communication had something to do with it, but I know it's not the case.

I think what his readers read in the past decade was the work of a man who, besides being loved at home, had finally thrown off all the vestiges of professorial presentation. To be as great a teacher as so many generations of Canisius College students say that Charles Brady was requires a certain theatricality—a well-communicated sense of literary passion and identification, an exaggerated self-definition.

You can't just commune with the avid young scholars in the front row. If you have any honor at all, you have to communicate something to the deadheads in the cheap seats. Even if they don't understand a word you're saying, you have to give them some sense of the bardic and of the glory of a life spent in literature.

It made some of this '70s and early '80s journalism operatic in its mythology. I think. In his final decade's work, he had stopped composing operatic arias and started composing magnificent chamber music. It is then, I think, that we heard his truest voice—just as passionate as the Yeatsian visionary his students knew, but wittier, more Edwardian and seemingly effortless.

Wonderfully apropos quotes from the Alexandrian library inside his head would find their way into his work, but so would the damndest, spot-on references to the society around him.

Anyone who thought that he resided in a 1940s Oxford of his own devising would be disabused of that notion on encountering an up-to-the-minute and unfalsified Brady take on academic gender wars or a perfectly appropriate reference to gangsta rap. (I must confess, the day I first encountered the phrase "gangsta rap" in a review by the 82-year-old Brady, I threw my head back and roared with pleasure.)

He was, in that great Henry James phrase, a thoroughly independent and aware man "on whom nothing was lost."

I remember seeing Dr. Brady on an old '50s Buffalo television show called "The University of Buffalo Roundtable." The subject of Beat poetry came up. The acceptable cant from the Professoriat of the '50s—and certainly from those on that show—was that the Beats were, to a man, hairy and filthy overhyped pretenders. Brady listened patiently to it all and said, "I don't know, I haven't read all of them, but I've read some

(Lawrence) Ferlinghetti and I think he's pretty good."

Let one think that his tower was totally ivory, he was also, without fail, the most journalistically current book reviewer we had—right to the end. It never ceased to amaze me that an old valiant man in failing health was, without question, our greatest sprinter. His reviews of major books would continually precede and presage major treatment in the New York Times and the news-magazines, often by several weeks. In such matters, his instincts were impeccable.

When longtime readers lose a voice like Charles Brady's it is always a personal loss, even for those who never knew him. But at the end of his life, I think, he was teaching us all some life lessons that were infinitely greater than he ever taught in the classroom—that the life of the mind can not only survive intact to the very hour of our death, but can, until the moment one is visited by what James called "that distinguished thing," actually increase in acuity, understanding and grace.

The world is full of people whom Charles A. Brady taught how to read and write and think.

At the end of his life and bedeviled by illness, he taught us something even richer—how to be.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 9, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1361) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1996 for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes:

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer my support for H.R. 1361, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996.

Since 1915, the Coast Guard has played a critical role in the protection of life and property on the high seas and in the enforcement of all applicable federal laws on, over, and under our oceans. The Coast Guard has maintained coastal navigation aids, engaged in icebreaking activities and has protected our fragile environment. The Coast Guard is also responsible for the safety and security of vessels, ports, waterways, and their related facilities.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to these maritime safety responsibilities, the Coast Guard also performs drug interdiction for the entire U.S. coastline, responds to all coastal oil spills, protects U.S. fisheries, and responds to human migration crises.

H.R. 1361, which reflects a slight increase over this year's funding level, recognizes the enormous responsibilities performed by the men and women of the Coast Guard every day and it deserves our bipartisan support. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE BY
SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA'S LEE
HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 1995

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, once again a magnificent performance by the Lee High School Madrigal Singers and Ladies' Chamber Choir earned them "Superior" marks in the April 22 Boston Festivals of Music Competition.

Schools from the United States and Canada were competing for the honor of being judged "Superior" by receiving the highest numerical score in each category of competition within their division.

In addition to capturing the "Superior" title within their division, the Madrigal Singers were awarded the "Grand Champion" trophy for receiving the highest scores of all choirs competing in the 1995 "Boston Festival." Five scholarships to a choral summer camp were presented to the group.

The Singing Lancers, five separate choirs in all, are a terrific group of teens with many proud accomplishments. The choral program is directed by Mr. Lindsey Florence who has been with Lee since 1978 and directed numerous choirs whose efforts have resulted in award-winning performances in North America.

This special group of young vocalists love to touch the world with their songs, and that is exactly what they did yesterday. The five choirs entertained the young patients at Children's Hospital where they brought some of the children's favorite songs to life in a program they choreographed themselves. Selected choirs have performed at the White House, Drug Enforcement Administration, Virginia Music Educators Conference, and numerous civic organizations. I am very pleased to recognize the Singing Lancers and the positive image they project to their community.

I want to once again offer my personal congratulations to Mr. Florence, an exceptional music teacher, and to the following young men and women who experienced the rewards of their hard work the night they were chosen "Superior." Members of the Madrigal Singers are: Pam Albanese, Gretchen Arndt, Andy Barrett, Steph Daniels, Alisa Ersoz, Craig Goheen, Steph Hawk, Heidi Hisler, Jen Holder, Matt Horner, Cathy Javier-Wong, Robbie Johanson, Emily Mace, Tanya Moore, Scott Niehoff, Ty Oxley, Corey and John Perrine, Joe Steiner, and Becky Whittler. The members of the Ladies' Chamber Choir are: Beth Brown, Alison Cherryholmes, Rebecca Dosch, Randa Eid, Stephanie Evans, Katie Farrell, Kelly Good, Emily Henrich, Nadiyah Howard, Amy Huntington, Mary Kim, Christina Lewis, Jenn Montgomery, Sara Nahrwald, Nicole Orton, Courtney Parish, Jenny Platt, Laura Scheip, Damara Thompson, Nhen To, and Marika Tsanganelias. My very best wishes to this very special group of teens.