

Remembering Geoff Davis

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Abstract: A tribute to the warm personality of Geoff Davis and his pioneering work in postcolonial studies

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What I remember best about Geoff Davis was his innate congeniality. Bright, cheerful, witty, warm, and amiable, he made friends easily and enjoyed social gatherings of every kind, especially those in which he could engage in conversations with others on a wide range of topics of mutual interest. He was an entertaining and enthusiastic talker.

One of his favorite topics was of course Commonwealth Literature, on which he possessed an uncommon wealth of knowledge based on the research, reading and reviewing he had done on works by writers from many different corners of the Anglophone world. He was particularly well informed on South African literature, having amassed an impressive collection of South African books and journals to support the amount of writing and teaching he did in this field throughout his career. But he could also speak authoritatively about literary developments elsewhere, as he did both formally and informally at ACLALS and EACLALS conferences. He had an irrepressible curiosity not only about the new writing coming out of West and East Africa, India, and the Caribbean but also about some of the earlier writing from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

He was a pioneering scholar who played a key role in the expansion and institutionalization of postcolonial studies in higher education. As a longtime administrator of EACLALS and of the European branch of ACLALS, he travelled to many Commonwealth countries to attend meetings, assist in conference arrangements, discuss curricular reforms, and meet with as many writers, critics, professors and publishers as possible. For thirty years he was part of the editorial team that brought out more than 200 volumes of the Rodopi Press series on Cross/Cultures: Readings in the

Post/Colonial Literatures and Cultures in English. He was one of the shapers and movers in our new discipline and he did it all with zest, commitment, delight, and an unusual degree of bonhomie.

Bionote: Bernth Lindfors is Professor Emeritus of English and African Literatures at the University of Texas at Austin.