

Monash farewells a 'much loved colleague'

PANEGYRIC

Professor Arthur Brown, chairman of the English department, died on July 29, at age 58.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ray Martin, delivered the panegyric to Arthur after a Requiem Mass in the Religious Centre on August 3. This is the full text:



The University is much saddened by the early death and unexpected loss of one of its most distinguished scholars and a much loved colleague.

Arthur Brown was born in Manchester in 1921 and was educated at Urmston Grammar School and University College, London. His first appointment was to a lectureship in English at University College and after some years he visited the United States as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow. He subsequently became Reader and then, in 1962, Professor of English, a position which he held until 1969, when he became Professor of Library Studies and Director of the School of Library Archive and Information Studies at University College.

In 1961 he was appointed general editor of the Malone Society in succession to some most highly distinguished scholars, a position which he held for 10 years. During this period he was awarded senior Fellowships in America and England and had extensive academic contacts in both countries.

He was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Literature of the University of London in 1965. His mentor was that most distinguished scholar Professor R. W. Chambers who, in his Will, left to Arthur Brown his own doctoral robes. These are draped over the coffin.

In 1973 Professor Brown, who had recently spent some time at the University of Sydney, was persuaded to leave London and come to Monash. He quickly found himself at home in his new environment and his many friends will know how much he came to love this University.

He was a most conscientious and civilised man. He stood for a tradition of scholarship, now under some threat from trendiness and gimmickry, which respected rigorous, disciplined mastery of language and expression, and the fundamental literary values. He sustained this tradition with grace, firmness and tolerance.

He was a man of wide literary culture. His publications reflect his special interests in bibliography and textual criticism, particularly in medieval and renaissance studies. He had a special interest in medieval religious drama and at the time of his death he had nearly brought to completion his edition of the York cycle of plays.

However, his deepest love of all was for the dramatists of Shakespeare's age, and it is his long roll of publications relating to them that will form the most enduring monument to his scholarship. The editing of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays from their fragile and often corrupt originals is an activity that calls for profound knowledge linked to exceptional keenness of mind. Arthur Brown possessed both. A distinguished editor himself, he was a valued guide to other scholars.

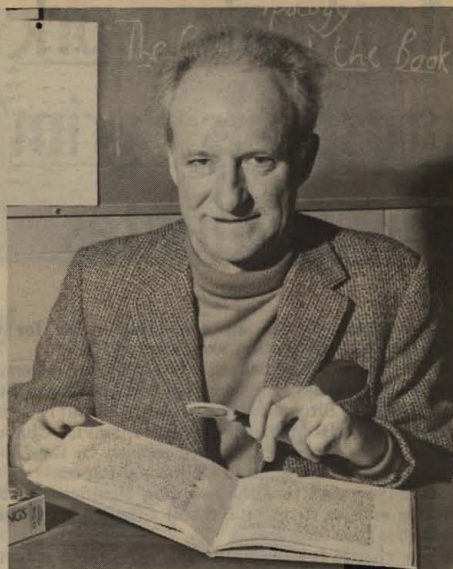


● The Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Peter Knowles, celebrates the Requiem Mass.

It is a matter of great regret that he did not live to complete his most important project, a complete edition, for the Clarendon Press, of the works of the Elizabethan dramatist, Thomas Heywood. However, there is a strong likelihood that this can still be brought to a conclusion, and that it will establish his claim to be considered one of the pre-eminent Elizabethan scholars of his time.

The novels of Wilkie Collins were another special interest. The lectures he gave on them, just a few weeks before his death, were applauded by the students in a spontaneous tribute.

Professor Arthur Brown had a deep love of theatre and was, over a long period, Chairman of the Alexander Theatre Committee. Here his wide sympathies and catholic tastes were invaluable when it came to planning a balanced program. While he was aware of the merits of the intellectual and avant-garde, he enjoyed what was unpretentious and unashamedly entertaining. To members of the theatrical staff Arthur Brown was a close friend and he contributed much to the good relationship which exists between the Alexander Theatre and the academic community at Monash.



He was an able and most devoted Chairman of the General Library Committee. He was an authority on early printing techniques and for the past few years had been engaged in building up a museum of printing machines in the University's Main Library.

One of the lesser-known, but nevertheless delightful contributions Arthur Brown made to the life of this University was the establishment, in 1975, of the Australian Chapter of the Crabtree Foundation. This small select body has its roots in University College where Arthur, in company with a number of distinguished scholars, determined that the life and works of the legendary English poet, Joseph Crabtree, should no longer go unhonoured. Each year, both in London and at Monash, Joseph Crabtree is remembered at a dinner at which notable speakers, drawn from an astonishing range of disciplines, "reveal" aspects of Crabtree's equally astonishing and eventful life. These have been joyous occasions.

A gracious geniality

In addition to distinction in scholarship Arthur Brown brought to the Department of English a gracious geniality and sociability. His courtesy and charm were extended to all — academic staff, secretarial staff, research assistants and his students. From them he received loyalty and deep affection. His keen sense of humor could brighten a dull meeting and lighten routine tasks.

Arthur Brown embodied the highest ideals of humanism — perhaps of an old-fashioned kind. People mattered more to him than paper. He banished filing cabinets from his study; books and manuscripts were moved with loving care so that a visitor might sit in comfort.

Something of the character of the man is indicated by the list of recreations which appear under his name in Who's Who — studying mathematics, railway timetables and booksellers' catalogues, walking and taking snuff!

Outside the circle of the English department he was a familiar figure at University occasions — at concerts in Blackwood Hall, at plays in the Alexander Theatre and at many other functions.

The gathering here today, representing as it does a cross-section of the whole University community, shows how much he had become a part of the life of Monash, and how greatly he will be missed.

Mature age students' experience explored

The experience of mature age students who re-enter the education system after years away will be examined at a national conference to be held in Canberra from November 27 to 30.

The conference, titled "Adults into Education: the Transition", is being organised by the Australian National University's Centre for Continuing Education.

The conference will aim to bring together mature age students,

academics, counsellors and educational administrators.

It will explore three aspects of the transitional process:

Choices involved

- The educational and vocational choices involved.
- Preparation — acquiring the knowledge, skills and personal

resources necessary for undertaking a course of study.

- Orientation and adjustment during the first year.

It will look at such aspects as the provision of information to prospective students, availability of counselling services and preparation and bridging courses.

For further information contact the Centre for Continuing Education at ANU, P.O. Box 4, Canberra, ACT. 2600.