

## Eugene R. Kintgen

At one time or another and for nearly two generations, many young faculty and doctoral students in English have found themselves in the HPER gymnasium around noon. And, as they walked to their next class or contemplated lunch at the Union, they may have recognized out there in the jumble of basketball players a tall, fit man with a jump shot honed to perfection and, increasingly these days, a bounce pass that approaches artistry. That basketball player is Gene Kintgen, who has not only been a fixture in the noontime game for 30 years, but has also served the university—especially the university's graduate students—with energy and distinction.

Born in Jamaica, New York, and growing up on Long Island, Gene dabbled in a number of sports, basketball and golf among them, before enrolling in Princeton, from which he graduated with honors, and then matriculating at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, from which he received his master's and doctoral degrees. While at Madison, Gene cultivated his interests in linguistics, the history of the English language, and literature; indeed, in 1968, as he was applying for academic positions and completing his dissertation while on fellowship at Linacre College, Oxford University, one of the faculty with whom he studied wrote in his letter of recommendation that Gene was "equally at home in linguistics and literature." His dissertation, directed by the nationally prominent scholar Frederic Cassidy, suggests precisely this expertise, as it concerned the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical couplings in Old English poetry.

Before arriving in Bloomington in the fall of 1969, Gene had already placed an article on Robert Browning in the distinguished journal *Victorian Poetry* and embarked almost immediately upon an ambitious career as a scholar and teacher. As a young faculty member, Gene began publishing widely on topics related to stylistics and to Old English and the literature of this period, placing articles on Old English poetry and stylistics in such leading journals as *College English*. His first book, the widely used textbook *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English: Theory and Practice*, co-authored with Owen Thomas, appeared in 1974, the year after Gene was promoted to associate professor. More books and edited anthologies were to follow: *The Perception of Poetry* (1983); *Perspectives on Literacy* (1988), edited with Barry Kroll and Mike Rose; *Reading in Tudor England* (1996); and *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook* (2001), edited with Ellen Cushman, Barry Kroll, and Mike Rose.

As the later titles in this list suggest—and those of several influential articles such as the annotated bibliography "The Psychological Study of Language and Style" (1978) with David Bleich, Bruce Smith, and Sandor Vargyai and "Carlos Reads a Poem" (1983) with Norman Holland, arguably America's most influential psychoanalytic critic at the time—his intellectual interests began to expand in the later 1970s and early '80s to include cognitive psychology, reader-response criticism, and literacy, the last construed more broadly than mere competence with Standard English or the ability to comprehend written English at some basic level of proficiency. Rather, "literacy" or the practice of reading implies a broader cultural determination and the interpretive procedures sanctioned at a particular historical moment, one premise of his 1996 book, *Reading in Tudor England*. The psychoanalytic foundation of Holland's work in such books as *The Dynamics of Literary Response* complemented Gene's expertise, leading not only to their collaboration but also to Gene's work in the 1980s on linguistic perception and reading processes. These interests evolved in the 1990s in Gene's work on cognitive approaches to literary studies, particularly his seminal 1993 essay, co-authored with Joseph Bizup, in *College English*, "The Cognitive Paradigm in Literary Studies."

Gene's rich and varied career at Indiana took yet another turn at about the time he was promoted to the rank of professor in 1982; that is, his keen interest in graduate education led to his tenure as the director of graduate studies in English, a post he held from 1979 to 1986. During this period Indiana was one of the largest Ph.D. programs in the country, so administering it was no small feat. Indeed, as data published in 2005 by the Modern Language Association of America confirm, since 1966 the Indiana University English department ranks third in the country (after the University of California-Berkeley and Columbia) in producing Ph.D.s in the field.

This administrative experience led Gene to a position as associate dean of the University Graduate School, a post he held from 1987 to 2005 before being named as acting co-associate vice president for academic affairs and co-dean of the graduate school. The promotion was richly deserved, as Gene has made graduate education his primary interest and served the university's students with great vigor and success. The many contributions he has made include chairing committees on revalidation and reinstatement, nonacademic employment for Ph.D. students, the credentialing of graduate faculty, and co-chairing a campuswide committee in 1999 that studied the rising indebtedness of the university's graduate and professional students. The insistence by Vice President George Walker that he consider himself a utility infielder and not limit himself solely to graduate school affairs led to his central role in administering the Strategic Directions awards and most recently the Arts and Humanities awards.

Gene has also been instrumental over the years in maintaining the Preparing Future Faculty Program and, more recently, in participating in a three-year study sponsored by the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate. The latter committee has promoted major reforms in qualifying examinations, graduate student support, and other matters central to the important enterprise of revising a Ph.D. program to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The former program remains, after more than a decade, a vital source for "professionalizing" doctoral students by providing them with training about the jobs they will one day assume as teacher-scholars.

It is difficult to imagine a colleague more dedicated to graduate students and their education. It is difficult to imagine an English department without Gene Kintgen, without his wisdom, good humor, and exquisite sense of collegiality. Fortunately, at least for the time being, those guys in the noon basketball game will still have him on their team. He's been absolutely great on ours.

Stephen Watt