

Thomas F. McGann (1920-82)

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After a courageous struggle with leukemia for more than a year, Thomas F. McGann succumbed on July 13. Those who knew him will remember a very dedicated person with a sparkling sense of humor. He left his mark in the field of Latin American history through excellent scholarship and outstanding teaching and through noteworthy professional service at all levels: departmental and university, national and international.

A native New Englander, Professor McGann received all three degrees from Harvard, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his B.A. *magna cum laude*. After teaching at Harvard for half a dozen years, he came to the University of Texas at Austin where he stayed for almost a quarter of a century. During those years, he taught as a visiting professor at Stanford University, Columbia University, the National War College in Washington, and the Air Force Academy.

At the commencement ceremonies of the University of Texas at Austin in May 1982, Tom McGann was selected to be recognized for "a record of outstanding teaching in the Graduate School." It was a merited recognition applauded by all who knew or had worked with him. One of his former students had described him as "a deeply caring person," while another mentioned his "persistent dedication to high standards of literary style and clarity." A colleague recalled his "impassioned commitment to excellence" and "the absolutely superlative quality" of his doctoral students' work, many of whom have gone on to make their own contribution to the field of Latin American history. Professor McGann supervised twenty-six Ph.D. dissertations to completion. Six of them have been published as books, one receiving the prestigious Bolton Prize from the Conference on Latin American History, and three others are likely to be published. He also supervised twenty-three M.A. theses to completion.

His scholarly endeavors resulted in the publication of *Argentina, the United States and the Inter-American System* (1957; Spanish ed. 1961) and *Argentina, The Divided Land* (1966). He edited *Portrait of Spain: British and American Accounts of Spain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1963); co-edited *The New World Looks at Its History* (1963); and translated and edited José L. Romero's *A History of Argentine Political Thought* (1963). He also wrote a number of book introductions,

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contributed articles to published anthologies, and had published articles and book reviews in all the leading journals.

Most recently this writer was privileged to co-edit with Tom McGann a volume celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of Buenos Aires, entitled *Buenos Aires: 400 Years*. The University of Texas Press published the volume in September 1982. In recent years, Professor McGann, in addition to his continuing interest in the military, was engaged in research for another book on Argentina. He was reading widely in social psychology and to some degree in “psycho-history” as background for a book on the psychological, social, and economic causes of the destabilization of Argentina over the past fifty years.

His honors have included two traveling fellowships from Harvard, a Senior Fulbright-Hays Research Grant, and several grants from the University of Texas Research Institute and the Institute of Latin American Studies. His professional peers have often recognized him: he was elected Chairman of the Conference on Latin American History and to membership on the Executive Board of the Latin American Studies Association. He was selected to be a member of the Texas Institute of Letters and United States National Member on the Commission on History of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History.

The word “service” describes another characteristic of his career. Tom McGann had a robust physique and a military bearing that reflected his years of active and reserve duty with the United States Navy. During World War II, he was Assistant Naval Attaché at the embassies in Lima and Buenos Aires. After the war and until 1976, he continuously served as an active reservist, achieving the rank of Captain in the United States Naval Reserve (Naval Intelligence).

Professionally he was editor of the *Latin American Research Review* for five years and a member of the Board of Editors of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*. He served the CLAH and the American Historical Association on various committees and took part in the evaluation of a number of doctoral programs. At his home institution, he served as Acting Chairman of the Department of History and as Chairman of the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. He was Chairman of the Board of Faculty Advisors of the University of Texas Press and served as Chairman of the Publications Committee of the Institute of Latin American Studies. In both positions, he played a pivotal role in the development of the University’s outstanding reputation as a publisher of books and monographs in the Latin American field.

Tom’s students, friends, and colleagues share with his family a strong sense of personal loss. The Latin American history field has lost a dedicated and talented teacher and scholar. He will be missed.