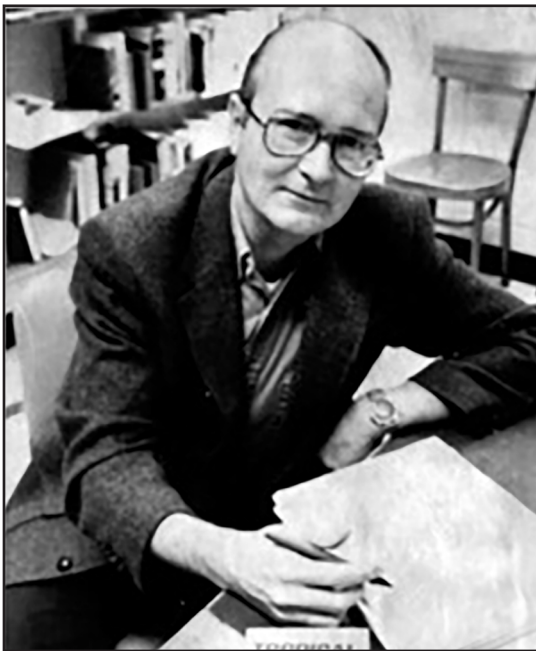


SDSU English Department In Memoriam

Lou Williams

The SDSU English Department, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and both the university and Brookings communities lost one their long-time faculty members this past year. The Williams family has graciously allowed us to re-print the official, public obituary for Dr. Lou Williams, Professor Emeritus of English. Everyone who knew Lou will immediately understand that even in his passing, he maintained his wonderful sense of humor. May you rest in peace, Lou. –Jason McEntee, Department Head of English



Louis Williams, 81, died after a long, sordid relationship with Alzheimer's on 29 Jan. 2019, at The Neighborhoods at Brookview in Brookings. His family thanks the folks at Edgewood Vista, The Neighborhoods at Brookview, and Compassionate Care Hospice for their loving care during his last four years.

Louis Perry Williams was born on 5 Nov. 1937, in Goose Creek (Baytown), Texas to Rubye (Brumfield) and Louis P Williams, Sr. “[I] came from high-class white trash. We kept our appliances on the back porch.” His family left East Texas and the appliances in 1949, when his father’s job with the Creole Petroleum Corporation took them to Venezuela. Lou returned to Texas in the early 50s to finish his secondary education at San Marcos Academy. He then earned his BA and MA in English at University of Texas, Austin and later his PhD in American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

In 1965 he began his teaching career as an instructor in the

literature. He retired in 2006 as professor emeritus. He graded thousands of themes over those 40 years, constructively criticizing some more than others (“That paper bled red ink. It looked like a bad weather map”). He also taught Introduction to Literature students the importance of the gravedigger in Hamlet and English majors how to pronounce “Yoknapatawpha.”

As an introvert of the highest order, he was perfectly capable of taking an 800-mile road trip in complete silence. In 1968 he married the extroverted Elizabeth Evenson in Brookings, who proceeded to drag him to social events throughout their marriage. Daughter Kate arrived in 1971. He taught her how to ride a bike, how to drive, and how to appreciate silence. Later on, they became snarky seat mates at dinner parties and other social events. Together they spent much of the 80s watching music videos and The Young Ones.

He was never happier than in his study reading, writing, or downloading a new computer operating system. He wrote several detective novels and published them on Amazon. Outdoor pursuits included golfing and planting tulip bulbs. He loved to travel, beginning with trips to and from Venezuela as a child, and later several family trips to London, a Greek island cruise with Elizabeth and, in 1993, an epic road trip with Kate to Atlanta via Memphis, his beloved New Orleans, and Montgomery, AL (home of the Civil Rights Memorial).

He loved movies—and hated some, too: “The impression you’re left with after watching JFK is that the only people who didn’t kill JFK were the Girl Scouts of America.” He frequently talked back to the evening news, including asking the eternal question of the Lewinskygate scandal: “Why on Earth did she keep the dress? What was she going to do with it? Donate it to the Clinton Library?”

His beloved Southern Gothic literature teems with ghosts of the past haunting the damaged, dysfunctional souls of the present. One of the themes of William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, according to Lou, is that “we want to do right by the dead because we don’t want them to come back.” Because no services are planned, we suggest that you might instead do right by Louis and honor his memory by reading some Hemingway or Faulkner, or by watching *Casablanca*, *Indiana Jones*, or (inexplicably) *Love, Actually*. A round of golf might be in order, too.

Lou’s survivors include daughter (Kate Hogan), son-in-law (Tim), and five grandchildren (Olivia, Sophie, Meredith, Nickolas, and Diego), all of whom will miss his dry sense of humor. His wife, parents, and numerous cats preceded him.