

# John W. Kronik

*May 18, 1931 — January 22, 2006*

Professor John W. Kronik died on January 22, 2006, in Los Angeles, California. He was a Professor Emeritus of Spanish Literature in the Department of Romance Studies at Cornell and an internationally renowned Hispanist scholar and teacher.

John Kronik was born in Vienna, Austria, on May 18, 1931; his family emigrated to the U.S. in 1939. He completed his undergraduate studies at Queens College, New York, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received the B.A. degree in Spanish *summa cum laude* in 1952. He received both his M.A. (1953) and his Ph.D. (1960) degrees in Spanish from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, specializing in 19th and 20th century Spanish Literature. He was the author of a book on Spanish theater, *La Farsa (1927-1936) y el teatro español de preguerra* (1971) and co-author of *Creación de una realidad ficticia: las novelas de Torquemada* (1997). He was also co-editor of *Intertextual Pursuits: literary mediations in modern Spanish narrative* (1998) and co-editor of *Textos y contextos de Galdos: actas del simposio centenario de Fortunata y Jacinta* (1994). In his more than 70 articles and book chapters and more than 40 reviews, Kronik ranged across nineteenth and twentieth century Spanish literature and, in recent years, wrote on Latin-American narrative and theater as well. He presented invited lectures in more than 60 colleges and universities, as well as papers at countless conferences and professional meetings.

Kronik received numerous academic honors and awards, including two Fulbright Fellowships (1960-61 and 1987-88), a Rockefeller Research Residency (1975), and an ACLS grant in 1983, and a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1983-84. He was president of the International Association of Galdosistas from 1981-85, and was the editor of *Anales Galdosianos* from 1985-90. John was a prolific and meticulous editor and served on the editorial boards of 31 distinguished journals. Perhaps his most notable service as an editor of the journal began in 1986 when he was appointed by the board of the Modern Language Association to be the first editor of its principal journal, PMLA, after the position was separated from that of Executive Director; he was also the first Hispanist to hold that editorship and the first to exercise the editor's duties from his home institution, editing PMLA at Cornell from 1986 through 1992. His efforts to transform PMLA led to a massive increase in submissions and turned the journal into an important forum for the discussion of current issues in field. He was honored with a Distinguished Retiring Editor Award from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals in 1992.

Kronik joined the faculty at Cornell in 1966. Prior to coming to Cornell, he was an Assistant Professor of Romance Languages at Hamilton College (1958-63), and an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Illinois (1963-66). During his career, he was also a visiting professor at Colby College; Columbia University; Syracuse University; Bryn Mawr College Centro de Estudios Hispánicos (Madrid); Purdue University, Middlebury College, Brigham Young University, University of Colorado, University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Irvine; the University of California, Los Angeles; and the University of California, Riverside. At Cornell, where the posts he held included Director of Undergraduate Studies in Spanish and Director of Graduate Studies in Romance Studies, Kronik was a fabled teacher whom his students repeatedly identified as the most accomplished pedagogue they had ever encountered. During his career, he directed some 30 Ph.D. dissertations and on three occasions was appointed to teach Summer Seminars for College Teachers sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

After his retirement from the editorship of PMLA, John Kronik became the pre-eminent elder statesman in two distinct, yet interlocking spheres, Hispanism in the United States and the affairs of the Modern Language Association. In each of these arenas, he was a quiet, yet profoundly influential presence, recognized by all as the consummate professional. His colleagues and students appreciated not only his wisdom and learning, but also his remarkable discretion and personal generosity. In 1995, his scholarly career was celebrated in a *festschrift* published by the *Bucknell Review: Self-Conscious Art: A Tribute to John W. Kronik*. Cornell students and faculty will continue to honor his memory, thanks to the annual John W. Kronik Lecture, endowed by Robin Koenig, one of his former undergraduate students, and her husband Scott Koenig.

*Debra Castillo, Philip Lewis*