



Jacques Bereaud

1938 – October 22, 2019

A scholar of French language and literature alike, celebrated Professor Emeritus Jacques Bereaud, romance studies, died on October 22. He was 81 years old.

An influential pedagogue and academic, Bereaud served as a professor for nearly four decades at Cornell until 2002. During those 36 years, he helped helm the romance studies division forward as the department chair and cultivated a passion for French dialect amongst students.

Born in Northern France, Bereaud grew up in the wake of World War II — where he learned to read from the safety of his own home — when schools were few and far between, according to his son, Francois Bereaud. But once French schools reopened their doors, Bereaud’s academic prowess shown through uncapped, as he went on to achieve some of the highest levels of education, including a doctorate from the University of Lille.

Amidst graduate studies, Bereaud spent five years teaching English in the French school system, a pursuit that ultimately inspired him to join Cornell’s faculty, where he focused on pedagogy and elevating students “to achieve their own academic goals,” Francois Bereaud told The Sun.

In addition to operating a Cornell study abroad program in Paris, Bereaud co-authored the textbook “Appréciations Du Français Moderne,” an anthology showcasing prominent selections of contemporary French prose in 1972, according to the University archives.

Bereaud also served as an advisor to the French Speaking Club in an effort to further foster “French language and culture,” according to a Sun report from September 1985. Beyond his work, Bereaud also undertook the restoration of an 1818 home in Danby, New York where he taught himself electrical work, plumbing and many other facets of home improvement all in a strenuous effort to renovate the home.

A globe-trotting academic, Bereaud immersed himself in travel both as a professor and well into his retirement. He returned to France often to visit family but also enjoyed exploring the U.S. and tropical destinations, with the French-speaking Caribbean island of Guadeloupe a favorite.

“Above all, Jacques’ true passion was family and friends. He was devoted to his wife, children, grandchildren, and extended family. He was proud to see his sons grow into adulthood and establish their own careers and families,” his son shared in an email to The Sun.

“He loved to talk to his grandchildren, nephews, and nieces, sharing many of his stories and learning about their interests. He never turned down a game of cards or a chance to chat with a neighbor,” he continued.

Bereaud is survived by his wife Helene, sons, Francois and Philip, daughters-in-law Joanna and Yvonne, and seven grandchildren, as well as sisters MarieTherese and Catherine.

*Written by Louis Chuang
Originally printed in The Cornell Daily Sun on November 25, 2019*