

Norman Kretzmann

November 4, 1928 — August 1, 1998

Norman Kretzmann, Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus at Cornell University, died on August 1, 1998, in Ithaca, New York. Although he had been under treatment since August 1991 for an incurable cancer, he remained philosophically active until a few weeks before his death.

Norman was born in Chicago on November 4, 1928, the son of Adalbert Raphael Kretzmann, a Lutheran pastor, and Josephine Heidelberg Kretzmann. He received his secondary education at Concordia in Bronxville, New York, his B.A. degree from Valparaiso University in 1949, and his Ph.D. degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1953. Before joining the Cornell faculty as an Associate Professor in 1966, he taught at Bryn Mawr College (1953-54), Ohio State University (1954-61), and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (1961-66). He was promoted to Professor at Cornell in 1968, and was appointed Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy in 1977. He retired from Cornell in 1995.

Norman's years at Cornell were full of service to the university, and to his college and department. He was Chair of the Sage School of Philosophy from 1970-75, Director of the Religious Studies Program from 1981-90, Acting Director of the Society for the Humanities in 1982, and Acting Director of the Field of Medieval Studies in 1987.

His record of exemplary service to Cornell was matched by a record of exemplary service to the philosophical profession. The two were combined in his service to *The Philosophical Review*, of which he was Co-editor (1967-68), Managing Editor (1968-69, 1970-75), and Editor-in-chief (1985-87). He was Editor of the New Synthese Historical Library (1989-92).

He served the American Philosophical Association as a member of its Eastern Division Executive Committee (1981-84), as a member of the Committee on Lectures, Publications and Research (1986-89), and as an advisor to the Eastern Division Program Committee (1985-88). In addition, he served on the Executive Committees of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy and the Society for Christian Philosophers.

Norman's curriculum vita lists fourteen books, a pamphlet, sixty-nine articles, and twenty-one reviews. He wrote on a variety of topics. Several of his early papers were on ethics, including a provocative defense of Mill in "Desire as Proof of Desirability." His early articles include a long and influential "History of Semantics" for the Edwards (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and influential papers on Locke's semantic theory and Plato on the correctness of names.

However, increasingly the focus of his work was on Medieval Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion. Norman's work on Medieval Philosophy falls into two phases. The outlook of his first phase, up to the early 1980s, informs his editing of the landmark, *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*. Norman wanted to show that Medieval philosophers were engaged in such central philosophical pursuits as logic, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science.

In emphasizing these features of Medieval Philosophy, Norman was trying to introduce the richness and variety of Medieval Philosophy into the mainstream of twentieth-century philosophical discussion. He thought it important to show that Medieval Philosophy was not confined to major figures like Aquinas, and that it was not confined to rational theology, metaphysics, and ethics. Thus, the Cambridge History deliberately emphasizes the philosophical significance of philosophers previously ignored, and gives special weight to the Medieval contribution to logic, philosophy of language, and the foundations of natural philosophy. This approach to Medieval Philosophy also resulted in a series of papers on semantics and natural philosophy, on the "Oxford Calculators", and in an edition and translation, published by Norman and Barbara Ensign Kretzmann, of the *Sophismata of Richard Kilvington*.

In the early 1980s, the focus of Norman's work in Medieval Philosophy began to shift. He began to concentrate on Aquinas, especially his philosophical theology, metaphysics and ethics. Having done what he could to show that Medieval philosophers were genuine philosophers who ought to interest their twentieth-century successors, he approached a central figure and his central concerns as one would approach a philosopher whose views deserve to be taken seriously and evaluated both critically and sympathetically. Norman's work displays a striking growth of sympathy with Aquinas and with his philosophical aspirations, but no diminution of the critical and argumentative spirit of all Norman's engagement with Medieval Philosophy. Aquinas' natural theology was the subject of his Wilde Lectures at Oxford University in 1994, which started him on a series of three books, each dealing with one of the three volumes of Aquinas' *Contra Gentiles*. The first of these, *The Metaphysics of Theism*, was published in 1997, and the second, *The Metaphysics of Creation*, is forthcoming. He was in the middle of writing the third, *Metaphysics of Providence*, at the time of his death.

One way in which Norman sought to overcome the neglect of Medieval Philosophy was through his own teaching. He was an enormously dedicated and effective teacher, and the leading scholars in Medieval Philosophy include several of his students. The excellence of his teaching was recognized in 1992 when he was the first recipient of the Northeast Association of Graduate Schools Award for Outstanding Graduate Teaching.

Norman's concern to disseminate knowledge and appreciation of Medieval Philosophy manifested itself in other ways. He was translator or joint translator of four volumes, and Principal Editor of the Yale Library of Medieval Philosophy. He was a founder and Chair of the Editorial Board of the journal, *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*. He was Advisor Editor of *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (1992) No. 4: Medieval Philosophical Theology and its Contemporary Extensions; and Advisor Editor of *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52 (1998) No. 2: Saint Thomas Aquinas. Most recently, he was Subject Editor for Medieval and Patristic Philosophy for the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.

Norman also made important contributions to the philosophy of religion. In an early article, "Omniscience and Immutability" (1966), he questioned the coherence of perfect-being theism. However, in later articles, most notably "Eternity" (1981) and "Absolute Simplicity" (1985) (both co-authored with Eleanore Stump), he developed and defended it.

Norman's excellence as a teacher and scholar was recognized in many ways. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1969, which he declined in order to take an NEH fellowship and a visiting Fellowship at Balliol College, Oxford. He was twice awarded NEH Research Fellowships (1969-70, and 1977-78). He held a faculty fellowship at the Cornell Society for the Humanities (1974). In addition, he held a Senior Fellowship at the National Humanities Center (1992-93).

Norman's intellect and learning, and his extraordinary wit and personal warmth, won him the respect and deep affection of colleagues and students alike. He counted himself, even after he knew he had a fatal illness, as a very lucky man. This was partly because he was able to make his living doing what he loved — for he did love the teaching and philosophical scholarship into which he poured his energy. He enjoyed playing and listening to music, reading novels and history, canoeing, and many other activities. In addition, he derived enormous pleasure and comfort from his family. He is survived by his wife of forty-one years, Barbara Ensign Kretzmann; his daughters, Anita Kretzmann, Maria Sañudo, and Julia Kretzmann; and his two grandchildren.

Carl Ginet, Scott MacDonald, Sydney Shoemaker