

5

PREFACE

Barbara Pell: In Memoriam

Barbara Pell was a beloved Professor of English at Trinity Western University from 1985 to 2009. An expert in Canadian literature and theological criticism, she published articles on such writers as Hugh Hood, Margaret Laurence, George Ryga, and Tomson Highway. Her 1998 *Faith and Fiction: A Theological Critique of the Narrative Strategies of Hugh MacLennan and Morley Callaghan* is one of the few in-depth studies of representations of faith among Canadian writers. In 2008, she was honoured with a Leading Women Award at the National Christian Leadership Conference for Women. Her death on March 9, 2009 was a profound loss to many in the academic community.

Barbara's passing prompted her colleagues to organize a special session devoted to Canadian literature at the annual meeting of the Christianity and Literature Study Group, an organization she had done a great deal to initiate, sustain, and administer. The papers from that session, given at the Concordia Congress of 2010, became the basis for this special issue of *Canadian Poetry* dedicated to Barbara's memory. The essays gathered here include studies of contemporary Canadian writers, such as Susan McCaslin and John Terpstra, whom Barbara knew personally. Others, particularly Morley Callaghan, Margaret Avison, and Margaret Laurence, were the subjects of her own criticism and teaching. Most of the essays address in some form the articulation of religious faith with which Barbara was so deeply engaged.

As many could testify, Barbara was a dynamic and vibrant personality in the Canadian academic community: a bold, generous, articulate, energetic, unselfish, and compassionate person, always fully present when in one's company. She was not only dedicated and hardworking, but also always ready to help, encourage, and nurture others, especially younger academics or those reticent to step forward with their research. She was, too, a committed Christian who was willing to engage and debate literary theories as well as literary analyses and pedagogy. A fixture at ACCUTE's yearly meetings, Barbara was well known and respected across the country for her integrity and courage.

We remain deeply grateful for Barbara's example of commitment and care for both the discipline and for students.