

# *In memoriam: George Monteiro* (1932-2019)

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The Professor Emeritus of English and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies George Monteiro passed away on November 5, 2019 from a heart attack. Born in Valley Falls, Rhode Island, in 1932, he was a graduate of Cumberland High School. He received an AB from Brown in 1954, an AM from Columbia U in 1956, and a PhD from Brown in English and American Literature in 1964. Monteiro spent his whole professional career at Brown. He was hired as an Instructor in English in 1961, became an Assistant Professor in 1965, was promoted to Associate Professor in 1968, and to Full Professor in 1972. He served as Assistant Dean of the College in 1965-66, co-chaired the Program in American Civilization (now the Department of American Studies) from 1971 to 1973, and was an Assistant Chair of the English department from 1978 to 1980.

From 1969 to 1971, Monteiro was a Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature at the U de São Paulo, Brazil, an experience that had a profound effect on him personally and professionally. Having learned Portuguese at home from his immigrant parents from mainland Portugal, he immediately felt at home in Brazil, as he rediscovered the Portuguese language and reconnected with his family's cultural roots. When he returned to Brown, he was determined to establish a program in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at his *alma mater*. In the mid-1970s, as the university increasingly moved in the direction of interdisciplinary studies, Professor Monteiro was instrumental in gathering a group of faculty members from various departments, whose scholarship and teaching were related to the Lusophone world, and successfully proposing to the administration the establishment of a multidisciplinary Center for Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and Bilingual Education. He was appointed its first Director in 1975, serving in that capacity until 1980. That was the beginning of a second

academic career of sorts. While continuing as an active member of the English Department, he spent considerable time at the new center (after 1991, Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies), well beyond his official 25% effort. He was a caring and dedicated mentor to generations of undergraduate and graduate students in English, American Studies, and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, who remember him fondly.

Professor Monteiro was the author of some forty books and published more than three hundred articles in dozens of academic journals in the United States, Europe and Brazil. His books covered a variety of topics, ranging from Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Emily Dickinson, Ernest Hemingway, Elizabeth Bishop, Stephen Crane, Robert Frost, and Herman Melville in the field of American Literature, to Portuguese authors such as Luís de Camões, Jorge de Sena, and Fernando Pessoa, on whose works he became an expert. In addition to an internationally recognized scholar, Professor Monteiro was a poet and translator. Notable among his several volumes of poetry is a book-length poetic dialogue with Pessoa, *The Pessoa Chronicles: Poems, 1980-2016*. His many translations of Portuguese poetry into English include Pessoa, Sena, Miguel Torga, and, most recently, Pedro da Silveira. He has left more than thirty unpublished volumes on a wide range of topics.

In 1989, he was awarded the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator by the Portuguese government “for distinguished contributions to the study and dissemination of Portuguese culture,” and in 1993 he received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the U of Massachusetts, Dartmouth for his accomplishments as a scholar of both American and Portuguese literature.

Professor Monteiro’s life and works were the subject of a collective volume, *George Monteiro: The Discreet Charm of a Portuguese-American Scholar* (Gávea-Brown, 2005). News of his death has generated a large number of testimonials by friends and admirers of his work, particularly in the Lusophone media.

He loved baseball, and he may be the only person in the world who has ever rooted for both the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees.

Besides his wife, Brenda Murphy (Brown PhD, 1975), he is survived by his children, Kate Monteiro of Warwick, Rhode Island (Brown MA, 1987), Stephen Monteiro (Brown AB 1990) of Montréal, Canada, and Emily Monteiro Morelli of Albuquerque, New Mexico; three grandsons, Dante and Aldo Morelli, and

Dhruv Monteiro; one brother, Edward Monteiro; and a number of nieces and nephews.

A private memorial service was held in Windham, Connecticut, where he lived for many years. The Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies will hold a celebration of Professor Monteiro's life and career in the spring semester on a date to be announced.