

In Memoriam

James H. Forse

This volume is dedicated to Professor James H. Forse who died at the age of 83 on April 24, 2023. He was a longtime member of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, and editor of *Quidditas* from 2003 to 2023.

Jim's research and teaching focus was on Medieval and Renaissance Europe. He was the author of *Art Imitates Business: Commercial and Political Influence in Elizabethan Theatre* (Bowling Green State University Press, 1993), and published articles which have appeared in *German History*, *The Journal of Medieval History*, *SRASP*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, and *Theatre Survey*.

BOOK

Art Imitates Business: Commercial and Political Influences in Elizabethan Theatre. Bowling Green State University Press, 1993.

ARTICLES

- “The Parish and Town on Tour in Medieval and Early Modern England: 1278-1624,” *Mediaevistik*, 34 (2021). (An international journal accepting articles in Ger. Eng. Fr. Sp.)
- “Peers and Performers in the Reign of Henry VI,” *Medieval English Theatre*, 43 (2021), (British journal)
- “*Sapere videre*” *How a Spreadsheet Helps Knowing How to “See” Royal Power on Display in England’s Counties, 1277 to 1642*, *Quidditas*, 40 (2019): 122-38
- “Touring in Kent: Some Observations from Records Published to Date.” *Early Theatre*, 22 (2019).

- “The Consistency of the Context: Texts and Contexts of The Merry Wives of Windsor,” *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium*, 18 (2019).
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- “To Die or Not to Die, that is the Question: Borrowing and Adapting the King Lear Legend in the Anonymous *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear*.” *Ben Jonson Journal*, 21.1 (2014).
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- “How ‘Black’ Was the ‘Black Legend’ in Elizabethan England?” *SRASP* 25 (2002).
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“Armenians and the First Crusade,” *Journal of Medieval History*, 17 (1991). (British journal)

“Extortion in the Name of Art. The Impressment of Thomas Clifton for the Queen’s Chapel Children,” *Theatre Survey. The American Journal of Theatre History*, 31 (1990).

“Art Imitates Business: Profit and Business Practices as Factors in Elizabethan Theater,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, 24 (1990).

“Ben Jonson’s ‘The Isle of Dogs’: Politics and Playwriting in Elizabethan England,” *Selected Papers, Shakespeare and Renaissance Association of West Virginia*, 14 (1989-90).

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Remembrances by colleagues and former students

I am unsure how long I knew Jim Forse. But, when I think of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, he is always there. I also don't know how I first met him, but we saw each other regularly at the RMMRA conference meetings and would chat. I was honored when he first asked me to join him as Texts and Teaching Editor, then Assistant Editor, then co-Editor, of *Quidditas* and we had an easy camaraderie with a shared mission. I miss Jim's emails and occasional phone calls. He made this job look easy--for which I'm quite perturbed! Jim was collegial and a warm mentor, who always had time for my pestering questions. Just as Paul Thomas mentored him, Jim mentored me and taught me the editorial ropes. I once asked him how someone who lived in what is clearly not the Rocky Mountain region ended up the editor of the RMMRA journal, he smiled and told me that when Paul asked and he thought about being able to go to conferences in places like Durango and Jackson, he was convinced.

One of the books Jim recommended to me many years ago was *Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. This 1951 detective novel, in which a Scotland Yard Inspector investigates the alleged crimes of King Richard III of England, encapsulates Jim's scholarly style in many ways, as he thought of himself as a historical detective of sorts. He thought of certain historical questions as a "case" to solve, probably why he has published at least 41 articles: there was always another problem to solve! Jim was an excellent scholar, a first-rate editor, and a better friend. I miss his gentle guidance and his warmth. It is to Jim that we dedicate this issue of *Quidditas*, which literally might not have survived without him!

Dr. Ginger Smoak
Editor, Quidditas
RMMRA Past President

The neat thing about being a scholar is that you stay around. Jim's work is inspiring to (aspiring) scholars like myself, and I have a feeling that he will continue to exert that influence (perhaps even more so) now that he has gone to the next life. Although there's certainly something to the idea that no one is happy who is still living, Jim did so much that still lives with us (and isn't this the nature of history after all?) so that I sincerely believe that he had it both ways. He was a genuine scholar and editor who loved what he did happily, and the evidence of this argues strongly for his happiness in eternity.

Yet this is a bittersweet moment. As I reflect and write about write about Jim's work with *Quidditas* and his many fine scholarly contributions, I'm saying goodbye to a mentor and a friend. I learned so much from him that I simply would not have discovered (or been "Forsed" to tackle) otherwise. He was also one of the few people who knew anything about Elko, a place he visited and enjoyed. He liked the desert, the "beautiful" canyon scenery, and one of the casinos (incidentally, the one that my mom and dad dealt at when I was a wee one). At the same time though, I'm now saying hello to readers of *Quidditas* as a new editor of the journal. I happily look forward to working with Ginger to carry on the excellent work Jim did with the journal over the years. I'm certain readers will agree that our first volume together is a great one.

Steven Hrdlicka

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A few buildings away from where I sit this sunny afternoon on the campus of Bowling Green State University, I met Jim Forse. I'm back at BGSU for a conference, and it seems fitting to be able to write a tribute to him in the place that served as his professional academic home and where our relationship as colleagues began. I chose BGSU for my Master's degree almost 30 years ago, intending

to be a modernist. Jim changed all that, first with a class in medieval history that consistently made the rest of my other coursework a little less compelling and then with the introduction of a project that became my M.A. thesis. I spent two years talking with Jim about the Wars of the Roses and Richard III by day as his TA and about Elizabethan England and its relationship with Spain in the evenings for graduate coursework and my thesis. During my degree, I discovered what many other of his students and colleagues had already learned or would learn during his career: Jim was a generous mentor, always ready for a brainstorming session, always prepared with another source to consult that might offer a different perspective or the missing piece of information I'd been searching for, and always kind in criticism and effusive in praise.

Our devotion to the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association – mine acquired through Jim's introduction and instruction—made our interactions a regular feature of my professional career for 20 years. I'm proud to say that I worked first as the Texts and Teaching Editor of *Quidditas* and then a co-editor for much of Jim's tenure as the journal's editor. He was a tireless promoter of the Association and its publication, and I have the many emails we sent over the years as evidence of his outstanding stewardship of the journal and his great pride in the scholarship *Quidditas* published. He worked hard to establish the journal as a highly regarded online presence in the field, and many graduate students and early career scholars benefited from the great care he showed in guiding their work through peer review and into print. The journal is one of the many legacies Jim leaves behind, and the RMMRA is stronger for his efforts and his dedication. Like others who knew and worked with Jim, I'll miss his wit and his erudition. He was a fine scholar, an outstanding teacher, a supportive colleague, and an even better friend.

Jennifer McNabb

*Department Head and Professor of History
University of Northern Iowa*

*I*t is no exaggeration to say that few if any in RMMRA have done more than Jim Forse for the Association, but to give a full accounting is virtually impossible because he did everything so quietly, generously, and expertly that we only caught glimpses of it. He accepted the post of editor in 2003 at a very difficult time for our journal and for the RMMRA. The journal had fallen behind, submissions were down, and its financial condition was considerably worse than precarious because of the escalating costs of copyediting, printing, and distribution. Further, the board had just voted to convert from a hard copy to an electronic journal. Jim nonetheless responded to President Paul Thomas's recruitment efforts to become editor, and once he did, everything at our journal turned around like magic. Within a year or so he had brought the hard-copy journal up to date, created our electronic journal, and for the next twenty-one years he produced without fail annual electronic volumes including this year, when, with his health failing and long hospitalizations, he completed the current volume just before his untimely death.

In the early years of his tenure, he solved the distribution problem by sending an annual copy of the journal by CD to all members at his own expense. Later, he oversaw the digitization of the journal from its inception in 1980 that now permits scholars everywhere to access it at no cost from an electronic repository at Brigham Young University. The journal is also indexed in all standard sources and is a part of EBSCOhost Research Platform that annually returns several hundreds of dollars to the RMMRA. His creation recently of a spreadsheet with over 1000 email addresses and institutional affiliations for medieval and early modern scholars west of the Mississippi in the US and Canada is another mark of his unflagging dedication to our journal. For the last four years he has sent a PDF of the journal to the entire list. This year he also included the Call for Papers. As he said, "Whether or not it garners positive results, it at least gets our name out there."

Jim's contributions were not confined to the journal. As a scholar of medieval and early modern history and theater, he gave numerous papers at our annual conferences, won the West award for the best paper by a senior scholar, and probably could have won the same award more than once had he re-entered the competition. He was also a generous annual donor to the Association as only our treasurers know.

He will be remembered as a kind colleague and good friend dedicated to scholarship, to our journal, and to the Association.

Charles Smith
Professor Emeritus
Colorado State University

I first met Jim Forse twenty-five years ago in Big Sky, Montana when I attended my first RMMRA Executive Board meeting. He was very welcoming and immediately asked encouraging questions about my research and the paper I would be presenting. He was preparing to become editor of *Quidditas* and had innovative ideas for further developing the journal, eventually transitioning it to an online forum.

I found his own research on English Renaissance theater thoroughly researched, insightful and most importantly, *interesting*. While his publications were detailed, their engaging style drew in the reader. His conclusions provided a big picture approach to all of us in Renaissance studies, not just those concentrating on English literature and history. His articles and books include studies on traveling theatrical troupes, Thomas Heywood's play *Edward IV*, Shakespeare and the London book trade and commercial and political influences in Elizabethan theater. He deservedly won the Delno West Award at least twice and I was fortunate to hear those prize-winning presentations in person.

While a faculty member at Bowling Green, Jim loved the West and particularly Las Vegas. He visited often and would call me and my husband to get together. While we shared passing remarks on the latest academic publications of note, our conversations were just as likely about the history of Las Vegas. He had multiple and varied interests, making him a fine conversationalist.

I considered Jim a friend as well as a mentor and I do miss him. His passing is a loss to Renaissance studies but his many substantive and generous contributions to the RMMRA will endure.

Margaret Harp
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