

## History and Directing Shakespeare

James H. Forse

*In years past I have been asked, “where did you get that idea?”—from those who perused something I wrote concerning the history of Shakespearean theatre, and from those who saw Shakespearean plays I directed for my local community theatre. Sometimes the question was a compliment. Yet the question, I think, points to a sort of symbiosis that academic research and the practical dictates of directing a play can offer to anyone. For it’s truly hard for me to tell whether my research into theatre history has come to affect how I directed Shakespeare, or whether directing Shakespeare’s plays in a community theatre affected how I perceive early modern theatre history.*

I began directing plays by Shakespeare before I began what I would call “serious” historical research into the theatre of his time. My first Shakespearean play was “The Scottish Play” (*Macbeth*), and I did the typical background research directors are wont to do—literary and dramatic criticisms, character analyses, research into the “historical” Scots King Macbeth and his times, and performance histories of the play. A couple of years later when I directed *The Tempest* I found that was not enough. Much of the conventional literature stressed the melancholy mood of the play as Shakespeare’s “farewell” to the stage,<sup>1</sup> but a melancholy *Tempest* is not terribly funny; nor do most audiences know or care about Shakespeare’s “farewell” to the stage. When I discovered that the probable first staging of the play was part of royal marriage celebrations,<sup>2</sup> I decided that maybe the melancholy motif comes from hindsight rather than auctorial or performance intent. That persuaded me the play might better be viewed and played as a meringue, or some other rich and elaborate dessert.

Meantime, I took advantage of my status as a tenured faculty member at Bowling Green State University to sit in on graduate classes offered by the Department of Theatre. Courses in acting and scene design, of course, were useful for my activities as a director, but the courses in theatre history began to raise questions that

1 *Riverside*, 1609.

2 *Riverside*, 1606.

later pushed me to pursue scholarly work. The first thing I noticed was that scholars who wrote most books on theatre history were those trained in literary criticism and analysis, not in history *per se*. It seemed to me, therefore, that many works on theatre history were somewhat subordinated to standards, or concerns, of literary criticism. For example, I found it peculiar that while older, standard discussions of Greek comedies categorized and characterized them as Old Comedy, Middle Comedy, and New Comedy, those categories, and correspondingly different characteristics, are based solely on 11 surviving comedies by Aristophanes (Old Comedy), on larger fragments from plays by Menander (New Comedy), and the barest scraps of plays written somewhat after the time of Aristophanes (Middle Comedy). And sometimes Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* is categorized as Middle Comedy.<sup>3</sup> Much later I began to see assertions that the plays of Christopher Marlowe, and/or Ben Jonson were Shakespeare's greatest rivals in popularity with Elizabethan audiences<sup>4</sup> seemed based, for the most part, on their literary "quality." Later, when I did a study of play script publications, that study suggested instead that Thomas Heywood (often dismissed as a "lightweight") may well have been Shakespeare's most serious rival among audiences of their time.<sup>5</sup>

Though at the time I directed *Tempest* I still had not yet been bitten by a desire to pursue theatre history as scholarly work, the community theatre environment in which I directed ultimately did later shape certain ways of looking at theatre-history. My theatre, Black Swamp Players, always has been a relatively poor theatre. If I had \$300 or \$400 to spend on a production I was lucky. Also, The Players always has been a kind of gypsy theatre that lacked a permanent home for performances. Both of those factors forced me as a director to think in terms of economical productions (i.e. costs need to be kept low enough to break-even), long-term utility for expenditures for costumes and properties (i.e. can these things be used several times again, and by other plays, casts and directors),

3 Brown, "Ancient Greece," 441-47.

4 Logan, *Shakespeare's Marlow*, 4; Evans, "Jonson's Critical Heritage," 188-201.

5 Forse, "Playwrights," 27-38.

and relative minimalism in settings (i.e. what are the bare essentials needed to stage the play, and how portable are those essentials). Not surprisingly, when I began actual research into sixteenth-century theatre, these factors attracted me to documents like Henslowe's *Diary* (the account book of the rival theatre and acting company of Shakespeare), and interested me in attempting to determine how much an Elizabethan production cost, what were a production's probable returns, how much was invested in re-useable costumes and properties, how all that affected choice of plays and repertoires, and how could Elizabethan theatre businessmen keep costs down and profits up.

Because of that interest in money I've since been termed "the money man" by some early modern literary-trained historians--one review of my book (itself entitled *Art Imitates Business*) refers to my "consummately-commercial ideology."<sup>6</sup> Obviously the economics of staging Shakespeare for a community theatre pushed my research in a money-minded direction, and yes, has led me to believe that saving and making money were among the prime factors underlying almost all aspects of the theatre in Shakespeare's time. Most recently I've discovered that the gypsy-like nature of my own theatre's circumstances spurred my interest in research using the University of Toronto's *Records of Early English Drama*. Those records not only yield information about traveling acting troupes, but also the rich, and often expensive pre-Reformation, local dramatic conditions in late medieval and early modern England.

I've also discovered that the community theatre setting may well approximate some of the constraints Shakespeare and his company faced. In community theatre generally one finds one's cast comprised, at best, of six to eight very strong actors/actresses, and less experienced (or less talented) actors "underneath" as they say in the theatre world. Furthermore, except for the old "work-horse" musicals like *Music Man* or *Man of La Mancha*, one is not likely to have droves of potential actors available at auditions, or even willing

6 Jaster, 498.

to be dragooned into the cast. In my case, over the years it became apparent that I had a “stable;” certain actors consistently showed up at auditions for Shakespearean plays. Hence I became accustomed to working with a small group of people able and willing to hold down the major roles in most any play by Shakespeare I directed. They too became used to working with each other, so much so that they could bail each other out when a slip in lines occurred, knew almost instinctively what probable vocal and physical reactions their fellow veterans might give, independently discussed and rehearsed scenes among themselves, and coached newer members of a cast in techniques and approaches which would best work them into the company. (We’ve all scattered over the years.)

I also discovered quickly that the versatility of individuals in my “stable” had limits. Bruce easily could play Macduff (*Macbeth*) or Prospero (*Tempest*) or Edmund (*Lear*) or Grumio (*Shrew*), but not easily Caliban (*Tempest*), the Fool (*Lear*) or Petruchio (*Shrew*). Kirk easily could play Petruchio (*Shrew*), or the Fool (*Lear*), or Father Capulet (*R & J*), but not easily Orsino (*Twelfth Night*), or Macbeth or Antipholus (*Comedy of Errors*). Craig easily could play Tranio (*Shrew*), or Edgar (*Lear*), or Hamlet, but not easily the Fool (*Lear*), or Trinculo (*Tempest*), or Claudius (*Hamlet*). Terry could play Pompey (*Measure for Measure*), or Horatio (*Hamlet*), or Friar Lawrence (*R & J*), but not easily Hamlet or Claudius (*Hamlet*), or Romeo. So it was not surprising to me to read that Shakespeare roles may have tailored roles for his partner Richard Burbage who could not sing, or for his partner Will Kempe who could dance a jig but not do subtle humor.

In short, before I read Bentley’s *Profession of Dramatist* concerning the functioning of the Elizabethan dramatist,<sup>7</sup> and the functioning of the Elizabethan acting company,<sup>8</sup> I already had experienced working within a situation somewhat similar to that which Bentley described. And problems in securing sufficient numbers of actors pushed me

7 *Dramatist*, 62-87.

8 *Player*, 12-112.

into the practice of doubling (and sometimes tripling) parts, which led to an interest in, and some disagreements with, scholarly articles that attempt to discuss the esthetics of that practice. For example, Kirk played Banquo and Young Siward in *Macbeth*, and later the Fool and Cornwall's servant in *Lear*—which led him to quip that I was “determined to kill him off twice in every play.”

The first direct, concrete intersection between directing a Shakespearean play and scholarly, historical research began when I was scheduled to stage *The Taming of the Shrew*. I read the usual literature pertinent to production of that play, discovered and read with interest some of the newer feminist criticism, and made it a point to see the Stratford, Ont. production scheduled that year—one starring Len Cariou that received rave reviews and was later filmed for wide circulation. Despite all I had read, despite individual performances and scenes that were excellent at the Stratford performance, I found myself bored with the production about two-thirds way through the play. I thought that might be explained by a bad mood that day (I'm a chronic depressive), or by the fact that Shakespeare's audience had different comedic tastes, but at any rate, since I was scheduled to direct a play that now seemed to bore me, I reckoned I'd better look into what is known about its staging and reception of *Shrew* during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Serendipitously, that same year I also served on a dissertation committee for Ms Susan Wentworth, a doctoral candidate in theatre preparing a history of production/staging problems with *The Taming of the Shrew* about which actors and directors always complained. What came out of my own research and reviewing Ms Wentworth's work surprised me. The play does not seem to have been popular in Shakespeare's time like his *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*. There is record of only one performance in his lifetime; it was never printed during his lifetime; it is not mentioned in the lists of his plays given by contemporary London theatre-goers, and the only other reference to its performance before the English Civil War is notice of a court

performance in 1633 before King Charles I. *Shrew's* popularity seems to date to revivals of Shakespeare's plays in the period of the Restoration of the monarchy, *after* the Oliver Cromwell's government had shut down theatre for 20 years. And when revived, *Shrew's* popularity was based not on the Shakespeare's *First Folio* script but on Restoration adaptations like David Garrick's, which cut and pasted scenes and made the whole play into the so-called love affair between Kate and Petruchio (Garrick even named the play as such).

Ms Wentworth's study showed that complaints by actors, directors, and critics did not surface until 1844 (and then relatively quickly), when the actual *First Folio* script was used after a time-lapse of over 200 years. Wentworth's examination of plot-books, reviews, directors' and actors' comments from 1844 to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century demonstrated that every time one loophole or inconsistency in the script was addressed by one or another staging convention or technique, other loopholes or inconsistencies surfaced. "Solving" one problem seemed to create new ones. In a conversation with Ms Wentworth I suggested that the *First Folio* script of *Shrew* contained a series of wonderful comedy skits for actors, but when combined together they did not result in a well-scripted play. There Ms Wentworth and I parted intellectual company. She was horrified that I suggested such a thing; I believed my conclusion explained the problems within the script.

That conclusion, and my own up-coming production of *Shrew*, set me to work examining what little we know of the circumstances of Shakespeare and his acting company at the time *Shrew* was first performed. One thing thumped into the head of those of us trained in traditional historical studies is "when and where did such-and-such happen, and why then." Research emphasizing those criteria led me to conclude that for years we had missed the point. It was not a play about male-female, love-hate relationships, about subjection, seduction, subordination, and so on. The "flaws" in *Shrew* reminded

of Mozart's *A Musical Joke* (*Ein musikalischer Spass*), where Mozart spoofed bad composers and inept musicians of his time. It seemed to me that *Shrew* might be a similar composition—a way for Shakespeare to parody the pompous acting style and sloppily written plays of his company's rivals, particularly the Admiral's Men. It may well have been meant as an in-joke for late sixteenth-century audiences familiar with London's acting troupes—much like Moss Hart's and George S. Kaufman's *The Man Who Came to Dinner* was meant to amuse New York audiences in 1939 who were familiar with the Broadway theatre scene, and knew that.

So I staged it that way, with the twist that I made it also a self-parody of my own company—a modern, rinky-dink, community theatre. My one “adaptation” was to substitute the first “Mechanicals” scene from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Shakespeare himself scripted bad playwriting and bad actors, for the Christopher Sly Induction scene. That enabled me to introduce a group of modernized, amateur actors like Shakespeare's Nick Bottom and Peter Quince—in my case a motorcycle-riding egotist who wanted to play everything became Petrucio, a director-manager who divided up the parts, played Baptista, while keeping an eye on the production when not on stage. The cyclist's “riding buddy,” who tumbled and hid bottles on stage where he sneaked drinks played Petrucio's servant Grumio. Kate's actress character was a bitchy community theatre actress who believes she is vastly more knowledgeable and talented than the rest of the cast. Lucentio's actor-character was the amateur who gets stage fright. Hence, my actors had to perform layered roles—that is not only the role in *Shrew*, but the role of a caricature of a community theatre actor playing their respective. The “Green Room” back stage was visible to the audience, where actors off stage played cards, went over lines, read books, drank coffee (especially the actor playing Grumio who was force-fed coffee by the cast).

And with that approach, every single staging problem about which directors and critics had complained dissolved. My actors' main challenge now became not how to make Shakespeare's characters and the plots believable, but how to do a good job at portraying

realistic, but stereotyped, amateur actors doing bad acting. It was probably the most difficult acting my “stable” ever had attempted. For instance, my Petruchio worked hard (and succeeded) in gradually changing Patricia’s soliloquy “Have I not in my time heard lions roar?/ Have I not heard great ordnance in the field?”<sup>9</sup> from the words of a boastful Petruchio into an egotistical actor losing control and becoming enthralled with the sound of his own voice. (Incidentally, those lines closely echo Tamburlaine’s soliloquy berating his sons [*Tamburlaine*, part 2, III] “Hast thou beheld a peal of ordnance strike/A ring of pikes, mingled with shot and horse?”).<sup>10</sup> On the whole it worked. I knew that when the local newspaper reviewer remarked that the actor portraying Petruchio seemed to fall in love with the sound of his own voice. My staging certainly was the most difficult task I’d ever attempted. It included starting all scenes running smoothly, only to have them fall apart and the end. For example “Grumio” had tumbled so much on stage and back stage (remember that was visible to the audience) that Petruchio and Kate had to physically move him off stage at the end of the “post-wedding” scene.<sup>11</sup> The reviewer did realize that the scenes falling apart was intended, and remarked that the production was a very funny “parody” of Shakespeare. Those with little exposure to Shakespeare, or who professed to hate Shakespeare, raved about the production. So too, in the negative, did some of the “*aficianados*,” who accused me of not being “true” to Shakespeare (but some privately admitted they laughed themselves to tears). My retort was that I was being “truer” to Shakespeare than they knew, and to make the point, at least to myself, I wrote a paper (footnotes and all) to set forth arguments that my version really was what “traditionalists” call “doing it like Shakespeare did it.”<sup>12</sup> With knocking knees I presented the paper at a Shakespeare conference before college professors of early modern literature, and discovered that they received my “reading” positively—suggesting ways to strengthen the argument further.

9 *Shrew*, I, 2.

10 Forse, *Art*, 114.

11 *Shrew*, III, 2.

12 Forse, *Art*, 101-19.

That was my first entrance into writing theatre history, and that got me started. What that view of the play seemed to suggest to me was that Shakespeare was interested in pleasing a mass, mixed-class audience (as opposed to an elite, sophisticated one) and making money. That led to other papers examining profit from the theatre, and profit's impact on how the theatre was organized and functioned. Research for the *Shrew* paper continually had led to comparisons with the so-called Bad Quarto of *The Taming of A Shrew*, and the idea of unauthorized printings of plays. Since comparisons noted that the role of Christopher Sly, most likely Will Kemp's role, was expanded, my experience with actor's egos made me conclude that perhaps *The Taming of A Shrew* was the play as Kemp wished it, and that in turn led to a paper on Kemp as the probable source for most of the unauthorized printings of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>13</sup> That in turn led me to examine, and write about, how much money was at stake in the theatrical world of Shakespeare,<sup>14</sup> how much Shakespeare himself may have earned, and what those earnings suggested in terms of Shakespeare's view of his career (Forse *Art*, 49-70). At that point, for me at least, Shakespeare ceased to be the artist SHAKESPEARE (capital letters, trumpets, veneration, and all that) and instead began to look like a repertory actor who also wrote plays, much like figures from the now-defunct contract-system movie studio, or TV series like *Saturday Night Live*, *C. S. I.*, *Friends*, and so on.

Meantime, information I had absorbed from my historical research—on doubling, on certain roles written to fit certain specific actors, on Shakespeare creating situations and circumstances immediately understandable to the average sixteenth-century Londoner—began to affect the way I directed. Hence when I directed *Measure for Measure* I looked for some way to shape the play in a garb that would make easy identification of basic premises to an American audience. In its simplest terms the play is about cleaning up a town, “town-taming,” and what better way to make that point to Americans

<sup>13</sup> Forse, *Art*, 121-38.

<sup>14</sup> Forse, *Art*, 7-48.

than to set the play in the Old West with a diffident town marshal (the Duke) turning things over to the self-righteous “town-tamer” (Angelo, who was costumed in a black frock suit and carried a bull-whip coiled around his shoulder). When I came up short of actors to fill the roles, my historical investigations into doubling not only justified that practice, but solved yet another production problem. My Eschalus was forced to drop out of the production, and there was no one available to cover the role. Bearing in mind Shakespeare’s practice of writing roles to fit a specific partner, I examined the script and discovered that substantial as the role was, it was not entirely necessary to successful resolution of the plot. Further, the lines themselves suggested the character Eschalus was a cross between the characters of Angelo and the Provost, and so that’s what happened to Eschalus’ lines—some went to Angelo, some to the Provost, and no one in the audiences, even a couple of Shakespeare *aficionados*, noticed that Eschalus was missing (or if they did, they didn’t find his absence disconcerting and never mentioned it).

By the same token, while doing *Measure for Measure*, I began to question a traditional preconception I’d accepted concerning casting of boys for female roles. During rehearsals, as I was listening to my intelligent, experienced, talented, female, 18 year old Isabella roll through one of her long speeches, but towards the end experiencing difficulties in sustaining volume and emotion, I said to myself: “that role wasn’t written for a pre-pubescent boy; it was written for an older male, perhaps even a partner.” Exploring that thought further I began to suspect: (1) depth and stamina, and perhaps sustained pleasantness of voice, would be beyond most pre-pubescent boy’s capabilities, and (2) the size of Isabella’s role, equal to any of the major supporting roles in the play, dictated against the good “business” of casting a boy-apprentice in such a role. One of the partners would be sloughing off. And so arose another article—to wit, that major female roles in Shakespeare’s repertoire, like perhaps Rosalind and Viola, and certainly Queen Margaret, the Nurse, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Cymbeline’s Queen, etc., were not written for boy-actors, but for a

member, or members, of Shakespeare's partnership who specialized in female impersonation.<sup>15</sup> After all, the age of Shakespeare's heroines almost never is given. Among Shakespeare's many plays, it is only Juliet whose young age virtually is hammered into the audience's brains.

My graduate course work in theatre history stood me in good stead when I directed *Comedy of Errors*. A few years before, I had taken a seminar on *Commedia del'Arte*. Just as it was obvious that *Commedia scenarii* borrowed heavily from Plautus, most scholars observed so had Shakespeare for *Comedy of Errors*. That was in the back of my mind as I held auditions, and then the circumstances of directing in a small community theatre pushed *Commedia* to the forefront. More than usual, I had very, very few males audition for roles, but a more than usual number of females. I was forced by circumstance to do cross-gendered casting. Two young women of similar body-type stood out as potentials for the Dromio twins, and only one male was suitable for an Antipholus; but a young woman did have similar height, body shape, and timbre of voice. Staging the play as one done by a roving *Commedia* troupe seemed the solution. Remembering my readings on *Commedia* costuming, I set costumers to work on grotesque masks for most male characters (especially the two sets of twins), and on exaggerated and elaborately decorated codpieces. By that time the company had built up a fair stock of sixteenth-century costumes, with voluminous doublets that disguised shape, so between the masks and the over-sized codpieces (which embarrassed my male actors but my female actors seemed delighted to wear) the use of females "in drag" solved my inequities in male to female actors.

A similar crisscrossing of a director's and an historian's ideas arose when I directed *Romeo and Juliet*. Research into life in Shakespeare's London, particularly objections to the theatre by city-fathers and moralists, made it clear that when he wrote the play in the mid-1590s London was a turbulent city. There were fears of disturbances

15 Forse, *Art*, 71-100.

of the peace, apprentice riots (or at least demonstrations), retainers of rival lords of the Privy Council sometimes brawled in the streets, and the city lacked institutions for law enforcement or riot control.<sup>16</sup> It seemed obvious to me that the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* may have been set in Verona, but the circumstances would have resonated to Shakespeare's audience that this Verona was "our town." That suggested to me that an American audience could easily relate to the play if staged like Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, but to make the family feud motif work best for Americans it needed to be *Our Town* in Appalachia with two families who happened to be named Capulet and Montagu instead of Hatfield and McCoy.

During rehearsals that notion of Shakespeare's *Our Town* led me to investigate what else was going on in Shakespeare's *Our Town* (i.e. London, c. 1595), especially what may have induced him (remember the historian's obsession with "why then") to write that particular play at that particular time. Examining his source, Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*, did not seem to answer that question until, researching another matter, I ran across references to the problems of the Danvers brothers in 1595-96, and how those problems involved, and embarrassed their patron the Earl of Southampton, who also probably was Shakespeare's patron. From that I began to examine just how Shakespeare's deviations from Brooke's tale seemed to parallel episodes in the Danvers' tale, for instance the way Tibault (Capulet) is killed by Romeo (Montegu) in *R & J* is suspiciously like the way the Danvers brothers killed the member of another family with which their family had a long-standing feud, and though the Earl was not a female, his legal guardian was trying to force him into a marriage he did not want, and, in secret, the Earl secretly married someone else. Ultimately, much later, that line of research resulted in a paper on *Romeo and Juliet* and the Earl of Southampton.

During rehearsals for *R & J*, my actors, again, presented me with yet another facet to explore. Over and over again they expressed

<sup>16</sup> Forse, *Art*, 18.

consternation with how to make certain lines and scenes serious enough for a tragedy. It happened enough times that the old saw of “comic relief” for a tragedy began to ring hollow, and culminated at a rehearsal when Father Capulet, and Mother Capulet, and the Nurse, and Friar Lawrence, and Juliet all demanded that I help them keep straight faces while the Capulet household gave alternating bombastic lamentations over Juliet’s comatose body. At that point we all began to speculate that perhaps much of this play was meant to be funny, and when I examined the history of criticism, I discovered that it fell into the same mold as that of *Shrew*; from the end of the seventeenth century everybody assumed that the play was an attempt at classical tragedy, and that the seeming anomaly that 96% of the play comprised comic material was simply because Shakespeare was “learning” how to write tragedy. Out of all that came another article, comparing the large amount of comedic material in *Romeo and Juliet* to that of *Arden of Feversham*,<sup>17</sup> and attempting to place both plays within the historical circumstances of their first performances, and the possible influences that time-frame, especially the desire to “sell” the production to citizen theatre-goers, may have exerted on the composition of the plays.

At the same time I incorporated drama into my teaching. Though personally I think Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* is a “snorer,” I did direct my freshman, World Civilization students to the small scene in which Anthony, Octavian, and Lepidus trade off names of those to kill.<sup>18</sup> That scene captures the brutality of the Roman civil wars better than anything I know. I’ve also presented Jean Anouilh’s *The Lark (L’alouette)* in classes as the best interpretation of Joan of Arc in existence, because Anouilh rightly concludes, and convincingly demonstrates, that no matter what historians write, we can’t “understand” or “know” Joan of Arc; she’s become an icon or a legend; she’s beyond a real person. And I developed courses at the undergraduate level for the History Department, and at the graduate

17 Forse, “Arden.”

18 *Caesar*, IV, 1.

level for the Theatre Department, that I called “Shakespeare’s England.” I used Tudor era plays to examine the changing nature of the theatre from the early 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and also use the history of theatre as a lens into the social and political issues of Shakespeare’s time.

I’ve not directed a Shakespearean play (or any play) for some years now. One reason is that I grew tired of my company’s gypsy existence (and the theatre never brought me those things people think it does— fame, wealth, sex). But equally important, I found my interests had shifted so strongly towards theatre history that I began thinking of only directing plays that would further my historical research. But it was those experiences in directing Shakespeare that strongly affected my “scholarly” endeavors, and, in turn that “scholarly” work redounded on my experiences in directing. Whether or not you agree or disagree with my descriptions of my staging and my research, let me still suggest that all of us who are fascinated with the theatre of Shakespeare’s age should attempt to become more actively involved in actually putting those plays on the stage. That experience may be the best way to test the plausibility of our scholarly hypotheses and to develop new ones.

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### **Obituary: Newcomer Funeral Home, Toledo**

*James H. Forse, age 83, of Sylvania, OH, passed away peacefully Monday, April 24, 2023 at home with loving family by his side. He was born on January 26, 1940 to Leonard and Esther Forse in Binghamton, New York. James graduated from State University of New York at Albany with his Bachelors of Arts Degree and then obtained his Ph.D in History in 1967 from the University of Illinois. He taught for 44 years at Bowling Green State University, retiring in 2010. James was an accomplished book author of numerous articles in medieval history and Elizabethan Theatre. He was a mentor to many students, and an editor to the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Journal for 19 years.*

*James made it a point to have strong bonds and connections not only with students but with his family. He adopted a family from church, and also made it a point to send monthly letters to his children and grandchildren for many years. He was a man of few words, but writer of thousands of meaningful ones. Something they will always cherish.*

*Left to cherish James' memory are his loving wife of 61 years, Marilee "Lee" Forse; children, Catherine (John) Swope, Constance (Kenneth Jr.) Hicks and James (Becky) Forse; grandchildren, Zachariah (Meg), Savannah (Mike) Jeremiah, Autumn, Alexandra, Olivia, Victoria, Molly, Jackson, and Madelyn; great-grandchildren, Juniper and Micah; and many colleagues and dear friends. He was preceded in death by his parents.*