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Spring 2010

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**From the Gilded Age to the Internet Age:
Welcome to the New Web site of the Friends of Florham**

Students, scholars and members of the area community can now access our Web site to find a virtual treasure trove of information about the history of Florham, the historic mansion and grounds that were once home to the Vanderbilt-Twombly family, and a signature representative of the Gilded Age. You can learn about the Friends' successful efforts at preserving Florham, their plans for the future and their semiannual public lectures with well-known architectural historians and landscape designers.

In 2009, the Friends' board decided to investigate the possibility of creating a Web site, to increase our visibility and provide access to our important archives.

The Friends are known for historical preservation efforts rather than technical savvy, so we required professional advice. Board President Linda Meister enlisted her friend, Denise Bridgens, an active volunteer and technical professional to join the board. With Denise's understanding of the requirements required to mount a Web site we were on our way. Denise was introduced to William (Bill) Kennedy, director of Web operations for Fairleigh Dickinson.

Denise and Bill held their first meeting in November to discuss the issues of creating and populating a new site within the University context. Bill explained his time and resource constraints, and Denise agreed that the timeline should be flexible. Bill also shared his impressive photography collection of campus images and gave Denise permission for us to use them on the Friends' site.

Denise expanded her University contacts to include Brigid Burke from the College at Florham

library, who supported our digitization of the Burden ledgers, and the three of them evolved the look and feel of the Web site. Their goal was to create a visually compatible site, with clear, concise information about the mansion, the Friends of Florham's preservation and restoration efforts, the Friends' news and events and to offer links to

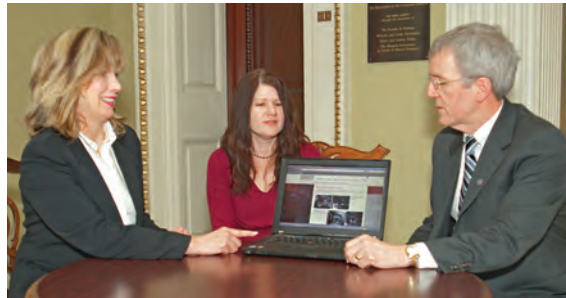
other Vanderbilt or historical sites.

Over the last several months, Denise, Bill and Brigid completed the initial site, populated it with past and present images of the mansion and grounds, news articles and past

issues of the newsletter and rolled it out to the board at the March meeting.

In addition to the Friends of Florham site, at fdu.edu/fof, the team created a Facebook site to hold private pictures of our galas and lectures. This was an amazing collaboration of technically talented and creative professionals. Denise's understanding of the issues and concepts facilitated the communication issues and expedited the production process, and we are so appreciative of her contribution. A special note of gratitude to Bill for sharing his beautiful photographs and for taking a personal interest in the before-and-after images for us.

And so, the Friends thank Denise, Bill and Brigid for everything they've done to create such a wonderful site for the Friends of Florham. And this is just the beginning, Denise has plans for our appearance on *Wikipedia*, additional utilization of Facebook and more links to related information.



Working on the Web site are, from left, Denise Bridgens, Brigid Burke and William Kennedy.

President's Letter

I must begin by mentioning Walter Savage and the enormous legacy he left to Friends of Florham, the University and his friends. Without his interest, research and incomparable storytelling, much of the Twombly history would have been lost. We will miss him enormously. He was very proud of the progress we are making in preserving our history.

This spring, Friends of Florham “fast forwarded” into the digital world. We first entered this world four years ago when we digitized the Shirley Burden black-and-white photographs taken in 1955. Our next digital venture was the digitization of the household ledgers bequeathed by Edward Burden. The goal is to make these valuable records of daily life on the estate available to researchers and students while preserving them in their delicate state. Board member Carol Bere is invaluable in managing this project, along with Brigid Burke, the University’s technical services and digital projects librarian.

In February, the Friends of Florham Web site was launched, thanks to board member Denise Bridgens, helped by Fairleigh Dickinson University Director of Web Operations Bill Kennedy and Brigid Burke. Even in its earliest days, the Web site wins praise from all who view it. The Web site provides a way for researchers and other interested parties to contact us.

Our final “digital” project is a film, based on the mansion tour Walter Savage used to give, done by student film interns. We feel a film will help train

student tour guides to speak knowledgeably about the history of the estate.

Last October, Connie Webster, professor emerita of landscape architecture, treated us to a lecture on the famous landscape architect, Andre Le Notre. Following up on her comments, the board voted to have landscape architect Ann Granbery and her assistant, FDU alumnus John Sulpy, create a Historic Landscape Preservation Plan for Florham. Granbery is familiar with Florham, having worked on the restoration of the Clowney and Italian Gardens. The completed plan will be a record of the history and evolution of the site. We feel it can be an enormous help to the University in future landscape planning. Board members Sam Convissor and Allan Kushen are helping to coordinate this project.

Finally, we are looking forward to our May lecture by Troy Simmons, architectural historian of the Archdiocese of Newark. Simmons will speak on the residence pipe organ, a subject sure to intrigue musicians and historians alike. Several of our board members are uncovering very interesting trivia concerning the use of these remarkable instruments. Walter Savage would have loved it.

We would not be able to continue efforts to preserve this Beaux Arts icon at the College at Florham were it not for generous donors and members. We hope we will continue to merit your support and hope to see you at our annual Spring Gala on May 15.

— Linda Meister

Friends of Florham Welcome New Board Member

Denise Bridgens has a BA in business administration and economics from Rutgers University and an MBA in marketing from Drexel University. Denise has spent much of her career with AT&T and is currently CEO of Argo Navis IT, a telecommunications and IT company. An active volunteer, Denise was on the board of directors of the American Red Cross for Southeast Morris County for six years and spent several years as a volunteer at Jersey Battered Women’s Service on the hotline and as a co-facilitator for several of its training courses.

Denise and her husband, Paul Collins, are members of the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club and have been involved with



Denise Bridgens

Cavalier Rescue for years serving as a foster family. Right now, two of their own Cavaliers are in training to become Pet Therapy Dogs and one of their first assignments will be to work with families at one of the women’s shelters in Morris County. Denise is currently on the board of directors of the New Vernon Garden Club, serving as parliamentarian. She also has developed and manages the club’s Web site.

Denise’s husband is chief technology officer of Total-Tec Systems, and they reside in New Vernon, N.J. In her spare time, Denise enjoys sailing, golfing, cross-country skiing and gardening.

Walter Savage's Wroxton Journals

By Walter Savage

New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Office of Global Learning, 2010
114 pp., \$20, paperback www.Amazon.com

Precise observations, serious commentary, characteristic witty remarks, quick segues, incisive character profiles, amusement, awe and occasional self-analysis: welcome to the world of *Walter Savage's Wroxton Journals*. Walter Savage was director of the College during the 1966–67 academic year, shortly after the purchase of the campus by FDU from Trinity College, Oxford University, in 1965. He also coordinated the spring semester program at Wroxton in 1985. Walter's genuine love of the College, the Abbey, the estate and of his students is beautifully captured in this recently published edition of the *Journals*, edited lovingly by

Walter Cummins, professor emeritus of English at FDU; with design and layout by Mahesh Nair, FDU's director of Web technologies, global learning; wonderful accompanying photographs; and a delightful foreword by Nicholas Baldwin, dean of Wroxton College.

Walter Savage always spoke of his residencies at Wroxton, accompanied by his wife, Patty, as among the happiest periods of their lives. To convey the essence of Walter's experience at Wroxton — in fact, the essence of Walter — it is best to let him speak for himself.

He has the eye of a novelist and a capacious memory. Nothing escapes his notice, and no incident is too insignificant for him to recount. He sets the stage in the first entry, August 13, 1966, where his description of being locked out of the Abbey after dinner assumes dramatic proportions: "There we were in the dripping blackness, rattling great Jacobean doors, feeling our way up terrace steps, poking tentatively about Stygian sunken courts and raising helpless cries for assistance from four domestics who understand only Spanish and whose privacy was protected from our noise by their sealed leaded windows..."

Walter grumbles about schedules, furnaces that don't work, washing machines that are not delivered and suggests that poltergeists inhabit the Abbey. But these annoyances are eclipsed by his genuine pleasure in walking around the Abbey

grounds where he admires the formal gardens, the Great Pond, enormous poplars and moorhens. He learns from the long-serving groundskeeper about the "crafty" habits of rabbits and badgers and takes an early morning walk looking for a glimpse of the muntjac deer. And Walter's overall joy in his days at Wroxton is contagious:

"We've been to castles, cathedrals, universities... and visited by some of Britain's best scholars and lecturers... We've heard directors, actors, musicians... on at least three days of the week. I am convinced I am in some kind of academic Elysium."

Observing and attempting to understand the British becomes a recurrent pastime for Walter. He speaks of their efforts to sustain "solid, dependable" lives; their precision-like orderly gardens, their tradi-

tional queues that form automatically and their inherent politeness. Yet he admits that all of this order and adherence to rules can make an American "strangely melancholy and full of longing for the scrap and scuffle... even the reassuring — if shocking — wastefulness of his land's ways."

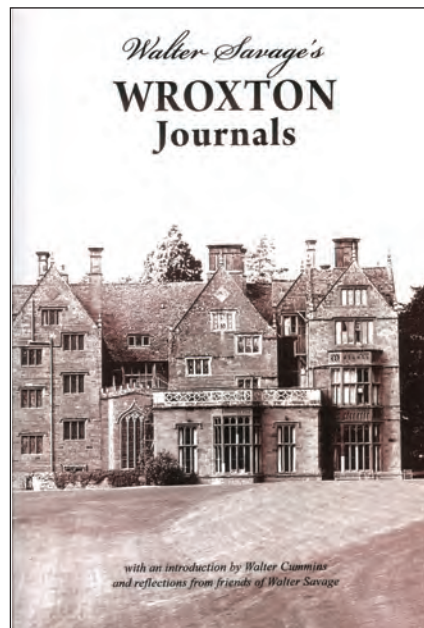
Later, Walter briefly refers to an incident that occurred during World War II, involving a wounded British soldier, who was with him in Italy, and remarks on the "teeth gritting love of homeland" and of the daily ability "to deal with contingencies" of the English. Still, Walter is not totally persuaded. He claims that he was "action-

ably assaulted" in a British barbershop by a "young sheep-shearer," who promised to give him an "American cut," which he was sure was spoken "out of a violent prejudice against my native land. Olivier's 'Henry V' or 'The Borstal Boy' appears to me a more accurately applicable designation."

Almost 20 years later, the 1985 entries reveal Walter at home at Wroxton and occasionally in a more contemplative mood. He is somewhat Yeatsian as he considers "the relationship between the singer and the song," questions his motives in writing about people, but concludes "what is important is that I did the saying, the judging."

He is also rather judgmental about his own writing as he comments in a later entry on what he has just written: "the self that reads the lines written by the

(continued on page 4)



Music for Millionaires: The Residence Organ in the Gilded Age

Join the Friends on Sunday, May 2, when Troy Simmons, architectural historian for the Archdiocese of Newark, will give a unique talk, “Music for Millionaires: The Residence Organ of the

Gilded Age,” a fascinating look at the lifestyles and music of the wealthy in the early 20th century.

Residence organs were mainly the province of the very rich with large homes — read mansions — that could accommodate the instruments. The organs were essentially music chambers that could mimic the sounds of church, concert or theater organs and even the music of dance bands in the 1920s. Mrs. Twombly ordered her Aeolian pipe organ Opus 1428 in late 1918, and it was installed in June 1919 in the Great Hall of Florham, next to the ballroom. The organ quickly became an integral part of Mrs. Twombly’s entertainment lifestyle, and her guests were treated to recitals on Sunday evenings by Archer Gibson, one of the most well-known organists in the United States at the time.

Robert Taylor, the current owner of the 1913 Aeolian pipe organ Opus 1280, which was originally purchased by Helen Gould Shepard, the daughter of financier Jay Gould, describes the substantial impact of the residence organ: “When horse-drawn carriages outnumbered automobiles ... It is hard to believe, but this wonderful musical instrument predates many common conveniences. Bringing the finest musical entertainment to the home, the Aeolian found a niche among the wealthiest people. Not only did the residence organ prove status, it

also provided home music that otherwise was unavailable. The music on the Aeolian Player Rolls covered a broad spectrum of tastes, and thus, no patron, nor his money, was excluded.”

Troy Simmons, BA, MA, CC, has served in dual positions of architectural historian and director of patrimony to the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., for the past four years. He is also an associate director of development for the archdiocese and teaches in the Historic Preservation Program at Drew University.

Simmons was curator of “Form, Function & Faith,” an exhibition held in 2006 at Seton Hall University, which highlighted the Arts and Crafts Movement and its influence on Roman Catholic ecclesiastical architecture in America. He is a Fellow of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and a graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture & Historic Preservation, where he completed a thesis titled “The Art Moderne in Ecclesiastical Design.”

Simmons also holds a master’s in ecclesiastical history from Seton Hall University. He is the co-author of *Guidelines Concerning the Handling of Ecclesiastical Patrimony*, a document that instructs pastors and administrators in the proper handling of art and artifacts that are of historical value to the archdiocese.

The Friends look forward to seeing you on Sunday, May 2, at 3 p.m. in Lenfell Hall in Hennessy Hall at Fairleigh Dickinson University, College at Florham, 285 Madison Avenue, Madison, N.J. Admission is \$25 at the door, and refreshments will be served following the lecture.

— Carol Knauff

Walter Savage’s Wroxton Journals, continued from page 3

self that writes them is dumbfounded by that embalming opening.” This, of course, leads him to think of his first freshman English class at Middlebury College [Reader: do not attempt to consider how we got here] where his professor, who was fired later that day for drinking, says to the class, “As you look out the window at those snowflakes, remember that no two flakes are the same, and none of them ever collide.” And in a key, perhaps, to his later life, Walter remarks: “I have often suspected that that professorial profundity gave me instantly the courage to contemplate a career as a member of a university faculty: if someone who greets a class with an opening like that one can get a job, why not me?”

Finally, Walter’s strong affection for his students, for the people who work at Wroxton and for the place itself are overriding themes — the soul of the journals. On May 19, 1985, his last day there, he writes a farewell memorandum, which he will post after he and Patty return home. The students and faculty have left, and Walter feels somewhat melancholy. After he and Patty return from dinner, they hear someone playing the piano in the empty Abbey, and they sit motionlessly for some time, as the “music swelled and quickened,” and the light disappeared from the room. “The experience was an extraordinary one,” Walter wrote. We feel the same after reading his *Journals*.

— Carol Bere

Please Join Us

The Friends of Florham invite you to join them on Saturday, May 15, for the Annual Spring Gala. The yearly Gala is the premier fund-raising event for the Friends and has raised more than \$350,000 toward the restoration of Hennessy Hall, its furnishings, the gardens and grounds.

A large volunteer dinner committee is working to ensure that this year's event will be as spectacular as previous years. The 2010 co-chairs are Dawn Dupak, Kathy Atencio and Suzy Moran, and committee members include Susan Adams, Carol Bere, Natalie Best, Denise Bridgens, Mary Clowney, Phyllis Conway, Alice Cutler, Emma Joy Dana, Doris Dinsmore, Elaine Earlywine, Marion Filler, Carol Knauff, Linda Meister, Audrey Parker, Carol Ponder, Irene Sciales, Ann Singleton, Betty Stockley and Ann Wellbrock.

Once again, Ed and Ruth Hennessy graciously agreed to serve as honorary co-chairs.

The Spring Gala draws guests back year after year. The terrace and gardens provide a spectacular venue for the seven o'clock cocktail hour; the dinner following features a menu straight from the cookbook used in the Twombly kitchen. John Saleeby and his orchestra present music that inspires couples to dance the night away. Please come and join us — we promise you a memorable evening.

Tickets for the Gala were still available when the newsletter went to press, but the room fills quickly, so please call 201-692-7008 to inquire. The cost for a Patron ticket is \$250 per person and the Donor ticket is \$150 per person. Any amount over \$80 per person is tax-deductible.

Hidden Vista

On October 18, Friends of Florham welcomed back Connie Webster, professor emerita of landscape architecture at Cook College and a partner in the firm Webster Associates, whose subject was "Beyond Versailles: The Influence of Andre Le Notre in Europe and America."

Webster pointed out that in 1890 Frederick Law Olmsted convinced Hamilton Twombly to buy the parcel of land that eventually became known as Florham. Olmsted suggested the site plan for the house. "From here," Olmsted said to Mr. Twombly, "you will feel as if you own all of New Jersey." Obscured by tall trees, this vista is no longer magnificent; suburban develop-

ment has replaced rural New Jersey. But one can stand on the back portico above the fountain garden and imagine the view Mr. Twombly and his wife, Florence, enjoyed.

The technique of a central axis defined by a sweeping view was typical of the work of the great French classical landscape architect, Andre Le Notre, designer of the gardens at Versailles in the 18th century. From a central point, usually the residence, Le Notre would plan a view to a point

often some miles distant. Nothing could disturb this view — the entire garden was laid out around this central axis.

With his success at Versailles, Le Notre was suddenly in demand all over Europe, designing gardens at the great French palaces of Versailles,

Chantilly and Fontainebleau, Het Loo in the Netherlands and Hampton Court Palace in England — where Christopher Wren's building served as Charles McKim's model for the mansion at Florham. In Vienna, Le Notre was responsible for the ornate gardens at Schonbrunn Palace and Belvedere Palace as well as the exquisite gardens at Nymphen-

burg in Munich. His influence dominates the baroque gardens of Schliessheim, Germany. Washington, D.C., and Paris are two examples of cities, which employed the axis/view technique.

Webster's lecture and slide presentation gave all who attended a "quick trip" to Europe, and everyone enjoyed glimpses of some of the great gardens of the world. Friends of Florham hope that another "trip" will be possible in the future.

— Linda Meister



Walter T. Savage: A Celebration of a Life Well Lived

More than 200 members of the FDU faculty, administrators, former students and friends streamed into Lenfell Hall on Tuesday, October 20, to celebrate the life of Walter T. Savage, who died on October 9. Many were struck by the irony that they were assembled in the very room where Walter taught his first class — Great Books — to 185 freshman members of the first class of the College at Florham 50 plus years ago. Throughout the tribute, a slide show featuring Walter in various stages of his career (and life) scrolled in the background, reminding the audience of the man who will be greatly missed. This lovely presentation, which also included photographs from Walter's loyal Wroxton students, was put together by Debbie Turvey, Betsy Hannon and her husband, Kevin.

Briefly, Walter was a graduate of Middlebury College, earned a graduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania and served in World War II. He was also professor emeritus of English at FDU, acting president of the University, director of FDU's Wroxton College in England, chairman of the English department and a volunteer with many organizations.

Walter was a trustee of the Friends of Florham, was the co-editor of the newsletter for many years and the authority on the Gilded Age, the mansion and the Twombly lives. He was also a trustee of the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, trustee and vice president of the Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, former president of the Washington Association and reportedly, the most knowledgeable, articulate walking tour guide at the Midlantic Center for the Arts in Cape May, N.J., where he had a home for many years. Walter exercised statewide influence as a member and chairman of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJHC) and was a member of Book Awards Committee of the NJHC.

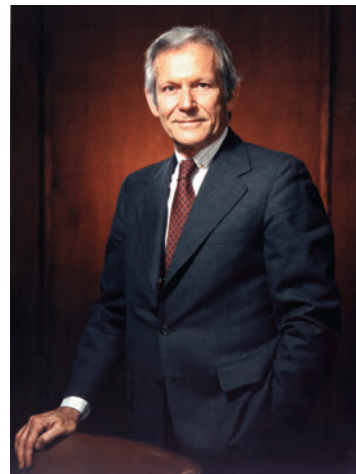
In other words, his was a life well lived, and this was evident in the recurrent themes of the speakers: Walter's love for FDU, for his students, his loyalty to friends and his great sense of fun, and what Walter Cummins, professor emeritus of

English, referred to as his "capacity for mischief." At the same time, Harry Keyishian, professor of English, described Walter as a person of "great seriousness," a "proud and private man," who had the capacity to make "you" interesting. Others such as Nicholas Baldwin, dean of Wroxton College, who was enlisted by Walter to head the college in 1985, remarked gratefully, "It is evident that my life would have taken a very different turn had it not been for Walter Savage." In fact, Walter's Wroxton class of 1967 students, who supported him in his final illness, still believe that "Walter changed our lives."



Kenneth Greene, College at Florham provost, welcomed

attendees to the celebration, where we heard stories of Walter's "kindness, his wit and wisdom, his strength and how he touched our lives." And in a comment that prefigured several of the talks, Greene remarked that, "Walter was an original — a warm and caring person with a delightful personality and a mischievous sense of humor.... He could say things and do things we would not dare — but he could get away with it because he was Walter."



Linda Miller Carrington, a former student and board member of the Friends of Florham, spoke of her friendship of many years with Walter and his wife, Patty, and read two appropriate hymns, the second (Hymn 680), with its affecting conclusion: "Time, like an ever-rolling stream,/Bears

all its sons away;/They fly, forgotten, as dream/
Dies at the opening day."

An enduring friendship of more than 50 years was also the theme of the tribute by Teddy Murphy, formerly of student affairs at FDU and longtime executive director of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. Teddy spoke persuasively

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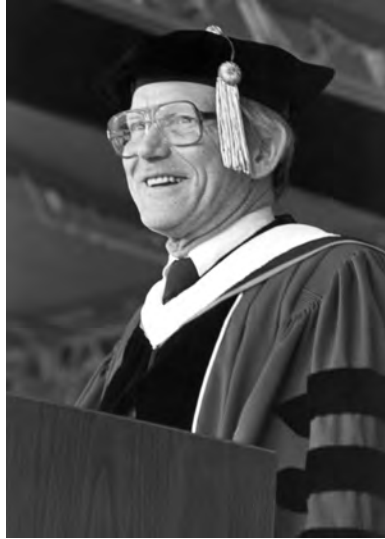
Savage, continued

sively of their friendship, of the impossibility of “fathoming the secret of Walter’s gifts” and concluded with a poem by George Santayana, philosopher and poet, written on the death of a friend, a few lines of which are excerpted here: “But yet I treasure in my memory/Your gift of charity, and young heart’s ease/And the dear honour of your amity;/For these once mine, my life is rich with these.”

Edward L. Hennessy, former chairman of the FDU Board of Trustees, which chose Walter as acting president in 1983, remarked that he was an excellent teacher, a skilled administrator, with a sharp wit and keen sense of humor. He also repeated his words of thanks from the Board in 1984, “FDU is a stronger institution today because of that one year that Walter Savage selflessly gave us his all.”

Lest the encomiums become a bit heavy, we must remember that we are talking about the life of Walter Savage, where humorous anecdotes, witty asides and amusing, occasionally bizarre incidents were business as usual. Geoffrey Weinman, dean, Maxwell Becton College of Arts and Sciences, praised Walter’s many contributions to the University, and remembered his first “experience” of Walter, when he was a newly minted PhD reporting for his first teaching post in 1968: “I walked down the narrow corridor on the third floor of the mansion toward my office, and there was Walter swinging from a door lintel. As I watched in disbelief, he let go and proceeded to take a student paper, and fold it into a hat which he placed on his head, and remarked: ‘I knew this would be good for something.’”

Nicholas Baldwin amusingly recounted an incident at Wroxton in which he, under Walter’s direction, and both his mother and grandmother all ended up having to push a car up an increasingly steep hill. Walter Cummins, FDU professor emeritus of English, while mentioning Walter’s love of the phrase, “moral turpitude,” spoke about the notes that Walter would



leave under his windshield wipers, with phrases such as “You were wonderful last night!” The implication, of course, was that the author had chosen the car of the wrong Walter. And Harry Keyishian commented on Walter’s love of Shakespeare, and even greater love, perhaps, of invoking the name of Don Juan the Bastard, a character with only a few lines in “Much Ado About Nothing,” and certainly

none of the quotes that Walter attributed to him.

Finally, FDU President J. Michael Adams spoke for all of us when he said, “Our sorrow is the sorrow all of us feel when we are saying a final farewell to anyone who has improved our days as you have improved ours. Walter was part of the soul of the University and enriched our lives,” he said. Adams spoke of the “algebra of life, a form of equations where things balance.” With Walter’s passing, he suggested, “a piece of the equation is missing.”

David Daniel, assistant professor of English, and Marjorie Keyishian, a member of the English faculty, concluded the celebration of Walter Savage’s life with a reading of Shakespeare’s memorable elegy from “Cymbeline,” Act iv, Sc. ii, “Fear no more the heat o’ the sun.”

One can’t help thinking that Walter would have been moved by the genuine praise and outpourings of friendship of the speakers. Yet he also might have been slightly embarrassed and responded with a typically witty remark, delivered with precise timing.

We remember Walter as a man for all seasons — teacher, writer, administrator — a special person and a loyal friend.

— Carol Bere



Pictured at a Friends Gala are Walter Savage and J. Michael Adams

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