MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS LLOYD A. W. KASTEN

Professor Lloyd A. W. Kasten was born on April 14, 1905, in Watertown, Wisconsin where he spent his youth and received his early schooling. He later attended the University of Wisconsin from which he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1926 with a major in Economics. His selection by the honorary Commerce society, Delta Sigma Pi, as the outstanding graduate of that year seemed to herald a promising business career. However, during his undergraduate years he had become very interested in foreign languages, adding French, Latin, and Spanish to his native knowledge of German. This interest became dominant with the acquisition in 1927 of a Master of Arts degree in Spanish from Wisconsin. He was able to gain his first teaching experience in that field thanks to his appointment as an instructor in Spanish at the University of Florida in 1927-28. This experience was followed in the summer of 1928 by his first trip to Spain where he enrolled in the courses of the Centro de Estudios Históricos for study under Samuel Gili Gaya, Pedro Salinas, and Dámaso Alonso. At the end of the summer he decided to undertake his doctoral studies and returned to the University of Wisconsin where he financed his study by serving as a teaching assistant and directing the activities of the Casa Cervantes. The effectiveness of his service was reflected by his appointment as a full-time instructor in Spanish in 1929. Despite heavy teaching duties he succeeded in completing his doctorate by 1931 under the direction of Professor Antonio G. Solalinde.

Professor Kasten served as an instructor at Wisconsin from 1931 to 1937 and during this period participated in the work of the Seminary of Medieval Spanish Studies which had been founded at Wisconsin by Professor Solalinde. It was at this time that the enormous task began of preparing the edition of the second part of Alfonso el Sabio's General estoria and Professor Kasten was appointed to the team so engaged under Professor Solalinde’s direction.

Additional valuable experience in Professor Kasten’s early career was acquired when, having been awarded by Wisconsin the Albert Markham Traveling Fellowship, he was able to spend the year of 1932-33 in Europe studying a number of Old Aragonese manuscripts. He also spent time in Portugal where he studied the language which was to play an important role in his future professional life. In 1937 he was promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor at Wisconsin and assumed the directorship, after the untimely death of Professor Solalinde, of the Seminary of Medieval Spanish Studies. During this same period he co-authored with his colleague, Professor Eduardo Neale-Silva, three texts for first and second-year Spanish classes which were to figure for many years among the most widely used such pedagogical aids in the country.

During the decade of the forties Professor Kasten developed a wide range of courses in Portuguese at Wisconsin which resulted in the establishment of a doctoral minor in Portuguese. This accomplishment received special recognition when, at the outbreak of World War II, Wisconsin was selected by the federal government as the site for providing intensive training in the Portuguese language for American military personnel. Another important activity of this period was the initiation of a project to create a dictionary of the Old Spanish language, which was subsequently expanded to include fourteenth- and fifteenth-century materials and which appeared in 1946 as the Tentative Dictionary of Old Spanish, a greatly expanded second edition of which is to be published by the Hispanic Society of America in early 2001.

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Professor Kasten was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 1942 and to that of Full Professor in 1947. He served as Chairman of the Department of Spanish, and Portuguese from 1948 to 1952. The decade of the fifties was especially noteworthy for his role in the establishment at Wisconsin of the first NDEA Luso-Brazilian Center of which he served as Director from 1958 to 1960 and again from 1964 to 1966 and which was responsible for training of the largest number of doctoral candidates in Portuguese in the country. An important accomplishment of the Center was the founding, under the guiding hand of Professor Kasten, of the Luso-Brazilian Review, which continues to thrive as an internationally recognized journal published by the University of Wisconsin Press. Professor Kasten continued to serve on its Advisory Board up until his death.

His love of things Portuguese did not, however, impede his research in the field of medieval Spanish which resulted in 1957 in the publication of his edition of the Poridat de las poridades and, in collaboration with the late Professor Antonio Solalinde and Professor Victor Oelrichs, of the two-volume Second Part of Alfonso X's General estoria. In 1961, he and Professor Lawrence B. Kiddle published an edition of Alfonso X's Libro de las cruzes.

Since 1971, with the aid of very generous funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Professor Kasten embraced the use of computer techniques in the confection of a massive citational Dictionary of the Old Spanish Language (DOSL), which, after his retirement from teaching in 1975, received most of his scholarly attention, especially in the matter of proofing-reading the some 2,800 pages of typeset copy which make up the first edition of DOSL devoted to the prose works of King Alfonso X. It is hoped that this lexicographic landmark will appear in print before the end of 2001. To ensure continuation of the DOSL project, before his death Professor Kasten created and generously endowed the Lloyd Kasten Fund at the Hispanic Society of America, as well as providing posthumously additional financial support for that lexicographic effort through his estate. Moreover, Professor Kasten's vast personal library likewise has been donated to the Lloyd Kasten Fund.

Professor Kasten's decisive contributions to the fields of Spanish and Portuguese have, understandably, resulted in his having been accorded many honors. Prominent among these are his Guggenheim Fellowship in 1956-57, his election as a member of the Hispanic Society of America, his appointment as a Vice President of the International Congress in Madrid on the Presente y Futuro de la Lengua Española, his designation in 1966 as Honorary Vice President of the VI Colloquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros, his selection in 1965 as the first Honorary President of the Luso-Brazilian honorary society, Phi Lambda Beta, his appointment in 1968 to the Antonio G. Solalinde Distinguished Professorship of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin, and his installation in 1974 as Académico de número of the Academia Norte-americana de la Lengua Española.

Prior to his retirement, Professor Kasten regularly carried a heavy teaching load of both undergraduates and graduates and directed more than sixty doctoral dissertations before hanging up his instructional hat. Several generations of fiercely loyal students, impressed by the meticulous preparation and organization of his courses and by his seemingly endless patience with the problems of his doctoral candidates, have frequently described him as the man whose profession is his life. However, this is actually far from true, for his friends and associates have long admired the breadth and depth of his interests. His amazing knowledge in the field of music, his expertise in photography, his skill in gardening and cooking, and his love of animals are among the many interests which characterized the rich life of this man.

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