

In Memoriam

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.

1920 - 2000

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at The Pennsylvania State University, died this year just before turning eighty.

Professor Johnstone arrived at Penn State as a member of the philosophy faculty in 1952, and he retired as a full professor in 1984. In the late 1970s, he began studying Classics at Penn State. In 1979, he earned his M.A. in Classics and in 1980, and 1982-83, he continued his studies in Bryn Mawr's doctoral program in Classics. During his time as a Philosophy Department faculty member and student of Classics, and throughout his retirement, Professor Johnstone was a leader in shaping an intellectual community between Philosophy and Speech Communication at Penn State, and thus between those interested in philosophy, argumentation, and rhetoric. His collaborations with other leaders such as Carroll Arnold, Robert Oliver, Donald Philip Verene, Thomas Olbricht, and Maurice Natanson resulted in groundbreaking considerations of the relevance of philosophy to argument and rhetoric, and vice versa. Professor Johnstone's work in these areas found its way into Classics too, as is evident in his critique of the argumentative structure and function of the rhetorical figure "*pankoinon*" in ancient Greek tragedy.

Professor Johnstone's deeply intelligent and free spirited explorations of philosophy, argument, and rhetoric surpass the significance of his remarkably prolific and sustained career, and the depth of his commitments to these topics of concern surpasses the significance of his explorations. Prior to Penn State, Professor Johnstone took his first academic position at Williams College in 1948. He arrived from the graduate philosophy program at Harvard committed to empiricism. At Williams, his philosophical outlook was confronted by the idealism of his colleagues, and later he found that his colleagues had argued him into idealism. As Professor Johnstone himself explains in *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument* (1978), his reflections on the etiology of the profound change in his philosophical outlook motivated his theories of philosophy, argument, and rhetoric. His explorations of philosophy as *argumentum ad hominem*, his refutation of philosophical argumentation as formal, his expression of genuine argument as bilateral, and his formulation of rhetoric as a wedge mark his most significant

contributions to the study of argument as well as provide a kind of implicit documentation of the way changes in his own philosophical outlook occurred.

In retirement, Professor Johnstone continued working in his university office, editing journals (both *Philosophy and Rhetoric* and *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*), and bringing his own work to publication. Fifty of his works reached publication during his retirement, making a combined total of 179 publications throughout the course of his academic career. During his retirement, he also continued his collaborations with colleagues and students from Philosophy and Speech Communication. One such collaboration led to his directing a doctoral dissertation in Speech Communication that combined his interests in philosophy, rhetoric, argumentation, and Homeric culture (one of his favorite areas of study in Classics). Characteristic of this collaboration and his other collaborations with colleagues and students was the extended working lunch. All of us who went to lunch with Professor Johnstone know that this was an art form that he had perfected. It was an indulgence in friendship and the pursuit of ideas, punctuated by culinary indulgences generally including a properly chilled martini, a beautifully prepared main dish, and always dessert. Professor Johnstone continued to maintain an office and the full activities of his life as an emeritus professor until several months before his death.

Professor Johnstone's academic career, intelligence, and deep commitments to the study of philosophy, argument, and rhetoric, as significant as they all are, cannot surpass the significance of the contribution he made to the lives of those who knew him. He became our model of excellence, our way of seeing the abundance of grace with which one person could live. Those of us who had the grand opportunity to study with Henry Johnstone and to be his colleagues know that he lived the very theories he constructed. He argued *ad hominem*, with generosity and respect for the ideas of others, and toward the end of critical consciousness. His way of arguing was his way of being. And his way of being was a demonstration of both his love for ideas and the people with whom he pursued ideas. For those who did not know him, he left behind a wealth of writing to talk about at the table long after he had excused himself.

Mari Lee Mifsud