



Dr. Lee A. Borah, Jr.

June 7, 2016

Borah, Dr. Lee A., Jr. age 84, died June 7, 2016, at the Wellstead of Rogers. Preceded in death by his parents Byrnina and Lee A. Borah, Sr. Lee was valedictorian of his Cokato High School class of 1950 and received his B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He also earned a M.A. from the University of Washington. Dr. Borah thrived on teaching and inspiring his students at Wagner College, Staten Island, NY, where he was a psychology professor from 1962 to 1997. Frugal by nature, Dr. Borah lived sparingly for most of the year and then spent summers traveling mainly in England and Japan where he developed decades-long friendships. After his retirement from Wagner, he returned to Minneapolis and established scholarships for Psychology and English students at the University of Minnesota. A lover of opera, theater and classical music he volunteered at the Guthrie Theater and donated money to the MN Orchestra, MN Opera, MN Sinfonia, the Schubert Club and many other organizations. He leaves treasured memories with those who knew him in England, Japan, Minnesota and across the United States. Interment Monday, 10:00 am, Hillside Cemetery, 2610 19th Ave. NE.

A Tribute From A Group Of Former Students:

On Tuesday, June 7, 2016, Dr. Lee A. Borah, Jr., joined his parents Byrnina and Lee Sr. He was 84.

Dr. Borah thrived on teaching and inspiring his students at Wagner College, where he had served as chairman of the Psychology Department during a career that spanned from 1962 to 1997. He brought lecture material to life through personal anecdotes and through his writings in the department newsletter, *Hallucinations*. In addition to student perspectives, the newsletter included his regular columns "From the Big Ashtray," "Sylvester Speaks" and "Report from Higher Brook," a detailed account of a small, intimate community and the people who lived there. The community itself was an elaborate set of miniatures arranged on his credenza, changing with the seasons.

"People who know me should be able to identify where I live in Higher Brook," he wrote in 1995. "Naturally, the front door is blue, and there are lilacs blooming on each side of the front door, and around the back door are crepe myrtle trees." In the summer, he wrote, the village "disappears into the mists of time...into closets, chests, etc."

Lee's sense of whimsy extended to his nickname for himself, "the happy hooker," a reflection of his love of creating hooked rugs. He designed some in the style of Monet, including a version of Monet's "Water Lilies".

He created a family for his students. Psychology Club and Psi Chi members joined him for potluck dinners at his apartment and end-of-semester parties on campus; both included his signature dessert, trifle. All were joyous gatherings filled with laughter. Dr. Borah also mentored his students individually, sometimes with the text of an article and his handwritten note, "Read, and let's discuss." Many of the friendships he developed with students lasted more than 40 years.

He held a B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, an M.A. from the University of Washington and had been valedictorian of his Cokato High

School class of 1950.

Frugal by nature, Dr. Borah lived sparingly for most of the year and then spent summers mainly in England and Japan, where he had established decades-long friendships -- among them, Peter & Mary Fears, whom he had visited in England from 1957 for as long as he was able to travel abroad.

His annual Christmas letters to friends and former students read like travelogues of his immersion in different cultures, accompanied by theater reviews, commentaries on politics and the news, alumni updates and more. His many travels were reflected in the large, framed matchbook collection that he kept on display at Wagner.

Lee Borah was a lover of opera and theater, a voracious reader and an avid walker. He may have counted every penny but he did not pinch them; Lee helped create a wonderful legacy for the Psychology and English students he supported through scholarships at the University of Minnesota. He donated both time and money to the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Guthrie Theater and many other organizations. His donations to the cultural life of Minneapolis include a formidable collection of Opera News extending back to his boyhood as well as hundreds of reel-to-reel recordings.

He leaves treasured memories with those who knew him in England, Japan, Minnesota and across the United States.

Tribute Wall

CI

“ Hello, i have photos of Lee jr. and byrnina that i found at the goodwill, i would like to return them to any family of them. Please email me cierra_swanda@hotmail.com ”



cierra - May 06, 2021 at 02:02 AM

S'

“ So sad to learn of the passing of my favorite college professor. Dr. Borah expected a lot from his students and cared enough to make sure they gave it their all. I have so many fond memories of sitting around the big table in the psychology office listening to stories of his travels in England and Japan, and of his trifle! He lived life to the fullest. Rest in peace. ”

S.P., Wagner '88 - February 26, 2017 at 10:50 AM

SD

“ Lee was part of my life for over sixty years, starting at the time when he was my uncle Gus' college roommate at the UW and I was still a child. "Gus" was a family nickname; he was Wayne to Lee, and many of you will have heard Lee speak of him. As Gus' roommate, Lee became part of our family and "unca Lee" to me. He called my mother "Sis," and often stopped over with one or both of us when he was in transit to Japan. He always had stories to tell, and I particularly loved talking with him about classical music and opera. I loved his stories from Higher Brook and the wry humour in "From the Big Ashtray" (although I have to say I was glad when he gave up smoking his pipe). Unca Lee, I will miss you very much.

Sis' daughter - June 12, 2016 at 08:54 PM

TR

“ Please accept my sincere condolences, I have many fond memories of Lee, he visited me and my godparents Gordon and Peggy Vearncombe each year in Tiverton, Devon England. He was always full of interesting stories about his travels around the world, and I always remember being fascinated by him and could listen to him all day. He struck up a friendship with my godparents when he visited their cinema in Tiverton, and this must have been some 30-40 years ago. He will be missed and I think of him often. Love and Best Wishes, Truly Rose, England xx



Truly Rose - June 12, 2016 at 11:42 AM

RI

“ 3 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Rich - June 12, 2016 at 07:49 AM