**In Memoriam: Desmond J. FitzGerald**

It is with deep sadness that we write to inform you that **Dr. Desmond J. FitzGerald**, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, passed away on December 26, 2023. He was 99.

Des FitzGerald came to USF in 1948 as an instructor after receiving an M.A. degree from the University of Toronto, where he studied with Anton Pegis. While an instructor, he continued graduate work at Berkeley, completing an M.A. degree on the political thought of Jacques Maritain. His Ph.D. dissertation at Berkeley was on "The Unity of Man in Descartes," with Richard Popkin. In his 50 years of teaching, he taught Logic, Philosophy of the Human Person, Philosophical Theology, Epistemology, and a range of courses in the history of philosophy with special attention to the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the 17th century, and contemporary Thomism.

As a faculty member, he was chair of the Philosophy Department (1971-1998), President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the American Philosophical Association, and the Northern California Renaissance Conference. He was a Fulbright Research Fellow at the Universita Cattolica de Sacra Cuore in Milan, and an NEH Summer Fellow at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, working with Gareth Matthews. He was also a long-time member of the American Maritain Association.

As a professor, he was passionate about Descartes, and loved teaching his Philosophy of the Human Person to undergraduates. He was an active part of the USF community and often presented to student gatherings early in his time at the College. He was a prolific writer on Thomistic philosophical theology and continued to write and present papers on Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain and Mortimer Adler in his later years.

Please hold Des' children - Cynthia and Brian, and his grandchildren *-* Allison and Cara, in your thoughts and prayers at this time in gratitude for his life, his fifty years in academe, his booming bass tones, and his love of wisdom and reason.

Notes of condolences can be sent to Cynthia FitzGerald/Brian FitzGerald, 41 Marin Bay Park Ct., San Rafael 94901.

The family had a private funeral service last January 10th, 2024 at Holy Cross Cemetery.

**Remembrance from Michael Lehmann, Professor Emeritus of Economics**

Prof. Desmond FitzGerald passed away on December 26, 2023 at the age of 99. Des taught Philosophy at USF from 1948 to 1998.  
  
I met Des in 1966, my rookie year on campus. Des was speaking at a USF Chapter meeting of the American Association of University Professors on behalf of two probationary faculty facing termination because of their public and outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War. Des’s appeal to the principles of academic freedom impressed me.  
  
In those days USF was apparently and demonstrably Catholic. The University and the Society of Jesus were not separately incorporated. The administration was Jesuit and the faculty and student body were overwhelmingly Catholic. Jesuits comprised a large share of the faculty, and they wore cassocks on campus. The University President was “Fr. President” and everyone – men and women – stood when he entered or left the room.  
  
The University had emerged from WWII without academic rank or tenure and without a statement on academic freedom. Gradually, however, a small cadre of lay-faculty leaders pressed for change. Des was one of them. They sought and won the formation of a University Senate, to be consulted on important academic issues. They struggled for the formation of faculty committees – such as the Committee on Academic Rank and Tenure – to be consulted on key issues such as promotion and tenure. And then they struggled to have these committees elected rather than appointed.

Finally, they insisted that matters of importance to the faculty, such as the construction of a statement on academic freedom, emerge from the Senate rather than the administration. By the early 1970s the University had academic rank, tenure, academic freedom, a democratically elected consultative governance structure, and a Faculty Handbook that codified these matters. And Des had been central in that effort.

By the mid-1970s, however, USF had a president who sought to roll back these hard-won gains and reduce the faculty’s material well-being. He no longer permitted the University Senate to perform the functions for which it was designed. A cadre of Young Turks turned to collective bargaining as a venue that required the University to bargain in good faith on matters crucial to faculty dignity.  
  
And the Young Turks relied on the Faculty Handbook when negotiating our first collective bargaining agreement. We lifted important passages – such as those on academic freedom and academic rank – word for word, as well as less significant paragraphs on campus mail and duplicating services.  
  
But not all faculty welcomed this transition. Des resisted collective bargaining and opposed the Union because he believed we could resurrect the old order and restore the University Senate once USF’s president left. Most faculty disagreed and collective bargaining was here to stay. But we all owe Des a debt of gratitude because our collective bargaining agreement evolved from the old Faculty Handbook that Des helped create.