

George Woodyard, ¡PRESENTE!

Jorge A. Huerta

George Woodyard's fascination with and love of the theatre, coupled with his founding and editing of the *Latin American Theatre Review*, encouraged and informed the careers of many scholar-practitioners working in the field today. Through George's generosity with his time, contacts, advice, and the periodic Latin American Theatre Today gatherings, he nurtured many careers. In fact, Prof. Woodyard was responsible for many of the friendships and academic collaborations we enjoy today. And right alongside George was Eleanor, graciously welcoming us into their beautiful home in Lawrence, always smiling, always the perfect hostess, no matter how rowdy we became, singing and dancing and "echando gritos" into the wee hours.

This roundtable brings together several theatre practitioners and scholars whose work has been shaped by George Woodyard. Through describing their own personal histories the participants will demonstrate how George's unassuming presence shaped the field and how his legacy will endure for generations to come.

As we were forming this roundtable, it occurred to us that each of us has a distinct and unique perspective on George's influence. We also compared notes on "who knew George the longest?" In my case, I really cannot remember when I met George, my *tocayo*. It seemed, when we met, that we had known each other forever. I will always be grateful to George for recognizing early scholarship on Chicano theatre, a field of inquiry still in development when I published my first article in the *LATR* in 1973. I don't think any of these "youngsters" can match that! George was always cognizant of the theatre that had its roots in *Latinoamérica*, but which was being performed and produced in the U.S. And by publishing research, reviews, and reports about the theatre of the Chicana/os, Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans,

and other U.S. Latina/os, the *LATR* gave notice to other theatre and literature publications that we were legitimate.

George and I saw many plays together, from Kansas to Colombia, Cádiz to Broadway, and always, he had something kind to say about the productions. I would be ranting about a production I hated and George would smile at me, that calming smile that I will always remember. In fact, I do not recall ever hearing George raise his voice; eyebrows, maybe, but never his voice. He was the ultimate gentleman in every sense of the term.

We all thank you, Profe, for guiding us with your bright light.

University of California, San Diego