

J. Anthony "Toni" Burzle: In Memoriam

Announcing the death of a respected and valued colleague is always a sad task. That task is especially sad when that colleague was also a dear and longtime friend. J. Anthony "Toni" Burzle was first and foremost our departmental colleague in German at the University of Kansas. We spent many years working together with him developing his treasured Max Kade Center for German-American Studies at the university. It was also our special privilege to assist Toni Burzle in editing the first five volumes of the *Yearbook of German-American Studies* from 1981 to 1985. His death on 23 September 1998 marked the end of a long and productive life, a life that was dedicated to fostering German-American cultural and educational exchanges and international understanding. Toni Burzle will be greatly missed.

Toni's life began in the first decade of the twentieth century in the Kingdom of Bavaria under the German Kaiser. At the end of his life he had long since become a proud citizen of the United States, a fact that we have to recall each election day. We will never forget the seriousness with which Toni would ask "Have you voted?" on those occasions. He also proudly led his fellow Kiwanis members in singing a rousing chorus of "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing." His first love was German language and culture, but he also cherished the democracy and freedom of his new homeland.

Born in Munich, Germany, on 20 May 1908, Toni studied in Munich and Dijon, France, and received the Ph.D. in German from the University of Munich in 1932. At the university he taught courses in German in the early 1930s for foreign students, one of them being his future wife Muriel Wittmann. Their marriage in 1935 brought Toni to Canada and ten years of teaching at the University of Manitoba.

In 1945 Toni accepted a position as assistant professor of German at KU and within two years became chairman of the department. During the two decades of his leadership of the department, he rebuilt the undergraduate and graduate programs in German, developed the fledgling program in Russian leading eventually to a separate department of Slavic languages, negotiated numerous student exchanges for the University of Kansas with universities in Germany and other European countries, and initiated summer language

institutes abroad so that Kansas students could study foreign languages while immersed in the culture of that language.

Under the auspices of the State Department he directed the Foreign Student Orientation Center at the University of Kansas from 1951 to 1976. For many years he was the university's adviser to the Fulbright program and served on the national screening committee for Fulbright applications to Germany. He was consultant for the Institute of International Education, New York; the Council on International Educational Exchange, New York; Inter-Nationes, Bonn, Germany; and the Austro-American Institute of Education. From 1967 to 1972, Toni served as associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences followed by a term as director of the Office of Foreign Studies, now the Office of Study Abroad. He retired from active service to the university at the end of 1976.

Toni developed a friendship with Max Kade, a German immigrant who made millions with a cough remedy, as well as a relationship with the Max Kade Foundation which led to the establishment of a distinguished visiting professorship for German in 1964, the addition of valuable art works to the collections in the Spencer Museum of Art at the university, and the creation, together with his colleague Erich Albrecht, of the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies in 1968.

Toni continued as director of the Center until 1987. Together with Albrecht, Toni organized the first symposium on German-American Literature and Culture at the University of Kansas in 1976, a meeting that led to the holding of annual symposia by the Society for German-American Studies. Toni was appointed first editor of the Society's *Yearbook of German-American Studies* in 1981. In the five years of his editorship, the Society's journal developed into a recognized scholarly outlet for multidisciplinary research in the field of German-American Studies. In his capacity as editor of the *Yearbook*, Toni also served on the executive board of the SGAS from 1981 to 1985.

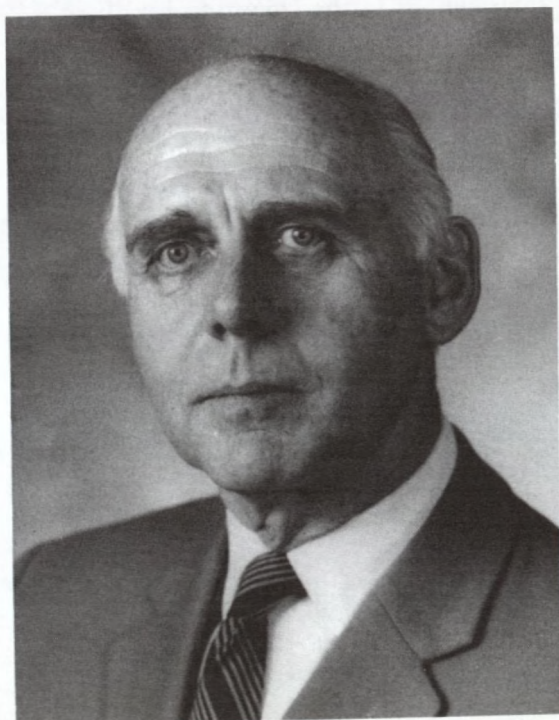
The president of the Society for German-American Studies, Don Heinrich Tolzmann, issued the following statement on behalf of the Society to be read at the memorial service for Toni on 4 November 1998:

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

At this time, as you gather in memory of our dear friend and colleague of many years, Professor J. Anthony Burzle, the Society for German-American Studies would like to join with you for this memorial service in honor of a person whose impact and influence on the University of Kansas, the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies,

is deep, abiding, and lasting, as it is for all of those in the field of German in the United States.

Especially for all of us in the field of German-American Studies, Professor Burzle, or "Toni" as he was known to us, played a role of unforgettable and inestimable proportions as the founding editor of the *Yearbook of German-American Studies*. At a critical stage in the history of the Society, he stepped forth and took on the challenge as editor of the new Yearbook. He placed this Yearbook on solid and impeccable foundations, attracting a world-wide readership, so that it has become the recognized flagship publication in the field of German-American Studies. This is due to the care, dedication, and zeal with which he accomplished his charge, and for this, the Society is forever in his debt. We shall miss him dearly, but are forever grateful that the *Yearbook of German-American Studies* had as its founding editor, Professor J. Anthony "Toni" Burzle.



J. Anthony "Toni" Burzle, 1908-1998

In recognition of his many accomplishments in German-American educational and cultural relations, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1967 and the Silver Medal by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in 1969. The Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth conferred its Leavenworth Lamp Award on Toni in 1975 for his pioneering efforts in making University of Kansas courses available to officers at the Fort. In 1985, the Society for German-American Studies recognized his contributions as founding editor of the *Yearbook* with a leather-bound edition of the *Yearbook* during the annual symposium held at the University of Nebraska. It is also a comfort to know that Toni greatly appreciated the richly deserved recognition he received during the dedication of the Max Kade Center at the SGAS Symposium in Lawrence in 1992.

Toni's lasting impact on the University of Kansas, its programs and its students is summed up in the words expressed by the then dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Robert Cobb, on the occasion of Toni's retirement in 1976:

It is very difficult for me to contemplate your retirement, . . . Your contributions to the University have been monumental. I lose no occasion to assert that were it not for your tender administrations we would not now have a Foreign Study Program. But the list is much larger than that and would require a volume to enumerate.

Now is not the time for me to express in any way the range of my private and public debt to you for the support that you have shown the Department of German, the College, and—always in all matters—the larger University. Others can speak more eloquently to those achievements than can I, but let me say how much I appreciate them personally and how much I always shall.

It is now difficult for us to contemplate Toni's passing. His contributions to international programs and to German-American Studies were indeed monumental. The two of us will long cherish the memories of working together with Toni on the *Yearbook of German-American Studies*.

Helmut Huelsbergen and William Keel
Max Kade Center for German-American Studies
at the University of Kansas