



Robert Brentano

MAY 19, 1926 - NOV 21, 2002



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Robert Brentano — UC Berkeley professor Julian Guthrie, Chronicle Staff Writer Saturday, November 23, 2002 ©2002 San Francisco Chronicle. Berkeley — Robert Brentano, a beloved UC Berkeley professor and scholar of medieval English and Italian history, died Thursday at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. He was 76. On the Berkeley faculty since 1952, Professor Brentano taught students for more than half a century. Known for his ready smile and conversational lecture style, the renowned medievalist's love of teaching never waned. He taught introductory history, Western civilization and upper-division courses in British history to generations of Cal students. "They don't seem very different at all," Professor Brentano remarked in a recent alumni newsletter, speaking of changes in students over the years. "I've spent a whole life teaching undergraduates. I know the shapes of their minds much better than I know my own contemporaries." Part of his success as a teacher stemmed from his genuine respect for students. He considered them "historians at the moment" and asked questions that demanded research, ingenuity and thoughtfulness. He earned many awards. In 1986, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education named him Professor of the Year. In 1991, he received the Clark Kerr Medal, awarded to individuals who make an extraordinary contribution to the advancement of higher education. Last spring, his work as a teacher, mentor and scholar was honored at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. In addition to his teaching, he was the author of six books and numerous articles on medieval history. His interest in history began when he was growing up in Newburgh, Ind., a small town on the Mason-Dixon Line. An elderly neighbor regaled the young man with stories of watching Confederate raiders cross the Ohio River. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1949 with a double major in English and history. He earned a doctorate in history from Oxford, which he attended on a Rhodes Scholarship. He is a distant cousin of the founder of Brentano's publishing,



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which later became Brentano's books. But, his family says, he never identified as such nor worked in the family business. Once he arrived at Berkeley — the first university that offered him a job, his wife said — he was taken by the diversity of the campus and was determined to fight for even greater access for all students. He was active in strengthening outreach programs for disadvantaged students. Although he was offered prestigious teaching jobs elsewhere, he remained at Berkeley.

“Everything he did, he did with enthusiasm,” his son James Brentano said Friday. “And, he really liked people and tried to understand them. This was true of his students, of his family, of his colleagues.” His son added, “He was also a nice, regular guy. A good guy. He liked football and enjoyed watching Sunday night movies. He was a lifelong, liberal Democrat.” He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Carroll Brentano, who is the university history coordinator at Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education and their three children, James Brentano of Orinda, Robert Brentano of Ross and Margaret Brentano of South Berwick, Maine. A private service will be held next week. A public memorial service for university friends, students and faculty is being planned for early next year. The family asks that memorial contributions be sent to the Delphi Indiana Preservation Society, P.O. Box 275, Delphi, IN 46923.



Tribute Wall

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Marah posted:

If you're tkiniag strictly about weight gain, and no other health issues with regard to fat or no fat, the calories are what the calories are. However, I've seen articles in the past that claimed that your body uses more calories to process the carb calories than it does to process the fat calories. In other words if you eat an equal amount of carbs than fat in one meal for example, a bigger part of the fat calories will be stored as fat than do the carb calories.

February 22 at 10:30 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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