

At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on April 10, 2001, the following tribute to the life and service of the late Einar Ingvald Haugen was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.

EINAR INGVALD HAUGEN

BORN: April 19, 1906

DIED: June 20, 1994

Einar Haugen came to Harvard as Victor S. Thomas Professor of Scandinavian and Linguistics in 1964. He was already the leading scholar of Norwegian and Scandinavian culture in the country, and insisted from the beginning that the two words Scandinavian and Linguistics be in that order. Language and languages were for him both the foundation and the linking girders; but at the center were always Norway and Scandinavia, and Norwegian and Scandinavian culture, whether in its native habitat or transformed by emigration. For that culture, Einar was both an historian and an exponent: one who saw it, understood it, and could convey it both from without and within. His publications ranged widely, including "Spoken Norwegian" (1946), "The First Grammatical Treatise: The earliest Germanic Phonology" (1950), "The Norwegian Language in America: A Study in Bilingual Behavior" (1953), "A Norwegian-English Dictionary" (1965), "Language Conflict and Language Planning" (1966), "The Scandinavian Languages: An Introduction to their History" (1976), "Scandinavian Language Structures" (1982), and "Blessings of Babel: Bilingualism and Language Planning" (1987), as well as "Ibsen's Drama: Author to Audience" (1979) and a variety of other books on, for example, the Norwegian-American essayists and novelists of prairie life, Ole Rølvaag and Waldemar Ager, and Norway's national poet, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. His influence on Old Norse studies was profound too, and contemporary students of medieval northern Europe ignore Einar's work on Scandinavian mythology, the runic alphabet, and the Vinland sagas at their peril. He was granted honorary degrees and awards from a number of American and foreign universities, was a member of the scientific academies of Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Sweden, and served as president of the Linguistic Society of America, the American Dialect Society, and the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study.

Scandinavian was for Einar a seamless garment. He cut his philological eye teeth on the language of the Old Norse laws, and on the sound linguistic insights of the Icelandic First Grammarian; but from there he moved freely and effortlessly to Henrik Ibsen and the contemporary lights of Norwegian arts and letters. There was a side of linguistics that had scarcely been dreamt of before Einar: the study of Language and Society, or

Sociolinguistics. He put on display yet another side of linguistics of which most linguists had scarcely an inkling at the time: Language Planning in general, and the role of Ivar Aasen in the formation of a Modern Norwegian language in the 19th century. It was through Einar that many linguists began to see more clearly the “language question” that has so powerfully and emotionally gripped and continues to this day to grip so many nations, states, provinces, and regions the world over. Linguistics has never been just an armchair science, and certainly Einar embodied that notion in his own work, and in the advice he provided various governments on minority languages.

When Einar arrived at Harvard, students were already telling stories about him. How, at conferences, he would pretend to fall asleep during a lecture only to rise quickly to his feet afterwards and rebut the speaker with a polished mini-lecture. But despite his professional keenness, Einar was not one of those haughty eminences who have no time for students and ride roughshod over the support staff. He took genuine pleasure in befriending people and making lesser lights feel at ease. He loved teaching and was always surrounded by students. He attracted bright graduate students and took a deeply personal, and as several of his former students note, even fatherly interest in helping them get the PhD and good jobs. No one can remember Einar ever being in a foul mood. Some years before he passed away, Einar expressed annoyance at his growing loss of hearing not with anger but by light-heartedly sighing, “I’m afraid I’ve just about lost the sibilants altogether.”

Einar belonged to that rare breed of professors who are social creatures by choice. He reached out beyond the university to gather around him the Scandinavian-Americans in the Boston area. He genuinely loved company. Einar and his wife Eva held splendidly festive parties in their Belmont home, especially on Norwegian national day, *syttende mai*. Einar would wear his special Norwegian sweater and dance with all the pretty faculty wives in the basement, and colleagues remember peeking into his study while he was busy: a lifetime of scholarship sitting in dozens of file card boxes and his articles neatly bound into volumes, annual ones, no less. Einar Haugen had been “in retirement”- a technical but never a meaningful designation in Einar’s case- for nearly 20 years when he died in 1994, yet despite keeping a very busy travel and publishing schedule, he and Eva continued to meet with their “seminar” on Sunday evenings at their home, a study group that had become nothing short of legendary in the Boston Scandinavian community. Einar was never afraid of new ideas or challenges, and when in the early 1980s people half his age were timid, at best, about emerging technologies, Einar gamely bought a computer and began talking in terms of ‘bytes’ and ‘boards’ and of how this new acquisition would influence his own research.

Einar Ingvald Haugen was born in 1906 in Sioux City, Iowa, to Norwegian immigrant parents, with whom he returned to the Oppdal region as a child before migrating back to the U.S. some years later. He served on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin from 1931 to 1962. Eva Lund Haugen, Einar’s wife of 62 years, died shortly after his death. They

are survived by three grandchildren and two daughters, with one of whom - Camilla Cai, Professor of Music at Kenyon College - Einar had the great pleasure of co-authoring "Ole Bull: Norway's Romantic Musician and Cosmopolitan Patriot" (1993) in the year before his death. Typical of his warm sense of humor was an invitation Einar sent for a publication party for another book a few years earlier: the card announced its message with an heroically defiant utterance drawn from one of the Icelandic sagas, Eigi enn eru allir Jómsvíkingar dauðir 'Not yet are all the Jomsvikings dead.'

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Harris
Eckehard Simon
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Stephen Mitchell, Chair