

*At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on December 5, 2017,  
the following tribute to the life and service of the late Evon Zartman  
Vogt, Jr., was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.*

## **EVON ZARTMAN VOGT, JR.**

BORN: August 20, 1918

DIED: May 13, 2004

Evon Zartman Vogt, Jr., Professor of Social Anthropology, *Emeritus*, and Master of Kirkland House (1974–1982), died on May 13, 2004, at the age of 85. Born in 1918 in Gallup, New Mexico, he was raised on the Vogt Ranch, where he grew up among Navajo, Zuni, Mormons, and Mexican Americans. Years later he reflected that his sojourns herding sheep out in the countryside were lonely times. But Vogtie (as he was known to most), from his studies at the University of Chicago in 1937 onward, was never to want for good company again. At Chicago, he earned his B.A. in geography and M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology, studying with Fay-Cooper Cole, Fred Eggan, Robert Redfield, Sol Tax, and other notables. In World War II he was an air combat intelligence officer in the Navy, helping pilots locate enemy submarines. While at Chicago, he met and eventually married a fellow student, Catherine Christine Hiller (“Nan”), who was to be his lifelong companion and intellectual partner. On the advice of Clyde Kluckhohn, a distinguished anthropologist (and distant cousin) who had stayed many a time at the Vogt Ranch, Vogtie did his doctoral research on acculturation among the Navajo, including interviews with a number of veterans who had been “code talkers” in the South Pacific. He concluded that military service had not had a big impact on their acculturation. Quite the contrary, in Vogtie’s view most of them continued to adhere to implicit Navajo views of the social and natural world, as practiced in ceremonialism.

Vogtie took his first, and last, teaching position at Harvard University. Kluckhohn recruited him in 1948 to participate in a research program on cultural values in the Laboratory on Social Relations. Vogt published the first Values Project monograph in 1951 and subsequently participated in fieldwork in Texas, publishing a book on that work as well. After receiving tenure in 1959, he began to explore Mexico as a site for ethnographic research. His fieldwork evolved into an interest in the role of religion and ritual. After consulting with the esteemed Mexican ethnographer Alfonso Villa Rojas, Vogtie embarked on the Harvard Chiapas Project, which was to become a 35-year enterprise deeply involving both graduate and undergraduate students from Harvard. The remarkable productivity of this enterprise has been often hailed but will likely never be equaled: 33 senior honors theses; 21 Ph.D. dissertations; 27 monographs and books; hundreds of scholarly articles and book chapters;

two novels; and two ethnographic films. So copious was his project that the Peabody Museum Press published the bibliography as a book (1977), which was in turn superseded by the list Vogt published in *Fieldwork Among the Maya: Reflections on the Harvard Chiapas Project* (1994).

His own comprehensive monograph, *Zinacantan* (1969), was awarded both the prize for best scholarship by a Harvard faculty member published by the Harvard University Press and the Fray Bernardino de Sahagún prize from Mexico's National Institute for Anthropology and History, honoring outstanding research by a foreigner. He and his long-term archaeologist friend and colleague Gordon Willey taught numerous seminars and courses together, and both helped to compile the massive *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Vogt 1969; Willey 1965).

Professor Vogt's distinguished students made their mark upon the profession for decades and in turn mentored their own intellectual progeny, a legacy of a truly remarkable life in academe. In his obituary in *American Anthropologist*, one of his most distinguished former students, George Collier, noted that "even critics have recognized that Vogt, and his some 143 students and collaborators, produced one of the discipline's most important projects of sustained ethnographic field research and made unprecedented contributions to basic research on a region of indigenous Mexico, whose importance grew in the wake of the 1994 Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas." His former students attest to his attentiveness in mentoring.

Vogtie produced 19 books, employing a variety of theoretical approaches but prioritizing empirical findings. For his immense efforts as a teacher, colleague, and writer documenting a culture in a remote but idyllic mountain setting, Vogt won recognition. He was one of the very few social anthropologists to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences (1979); he was also elected to the American Philosophical Society (1999) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1960), and in Mexico, he was awarded the highest honor accorded a non-citizen, the Order of the Aztec Eagle (1978).

On campus, Vogtie became a very popular figure because of his modest, unassuming, and gregarious nature; his natural, always lively conversation; and his time as Kirkland House Co-Master with his beloved wife, Nan. Together, they hosted dozens of eagerly attended social events over the years, including their annual Winter Solstice Ball, which drew to a close by the dawn's early light, when Vogtie led those remaining in a Zinacanteco prayer to the Sun God, to rise and renew the world and the new solar year. Their family life was as devoted and prolific as were their careers, with three sons, Eric Edwards Vogt, Evon Terry Z. Vogt III, and Charles Anthony Vogt; a daughter, Countess Skee Teleki; eight grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. After his Memorial Service, the procession to the reception at the Faculty Club, where he had been a regular, was led by a jazz band that played "You Are My Sunshine."

One of the most moving remembrances came from the Reverend Peter Gomes at—of all places—an FAS degree meeting. After a colleague had tried, and failed, to promote one of his cherished students from one level of Latin honors to another, Gomes recalled fondly how Vogtie had done the very same thing over the years, only to have his eloquent defense of his student go down to inevitable failure. Professor Gomes then said that when his day came to meet St. Peter at the Pearly Gates, he hoped that Vogtie would be there in his academic robes and wings, the good book in his hands, to advocate for his own entry into heaven.

Respectfully submitted,

Irven DeVore†

Byron Good

Arthur Kleinman

David Maybury-Lewis†

William Fash, Chair