

Warren A. Beck  
1918 - 1991  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, EMERITUS

B.A., M.A., Wayne State University; Ph.D., Ohio State University, March, 1954  
California State University, Fullerton From September 1, 1961 To August 27,  
1991

Birth: December 9, 1918; Death: August 27, 1991

When Warren Beck died of cancer two summers ago, he left an unfillable void in the lives of his family, his friends, and his colleagues at Cal State, Fullerton. A much-published scholar of national repute (his histories and historical atlases of New Mexico and California are accepted standard works, and his last book, a *Historical Atlas of the American West* published in 1989 already seems to have the status of an "instant classic"), he was, nevertheless, more noteworthy for his unstinting and ceaseless services to all who needed them. A committed Christian and a dedicated scholar, he styled himself as "Clio's Servant" upon receiving the CSUF Outstanding Professor Award in 1990, but he was much more than that. He was a selfless servant as well to his students, his colleagues, and his university.

Students, who found him formidable in the classroom because of his thorough, detailed, and well researched lectures, were invariably delighted to find him eminently approachable, informal, humorous, and friendly on a person-to-person basis. They also discovered something else even more remarkable: he liked them and was genuinely interested in seeing them succeed not only in his courses but in college and in life. Graduate students especially were beneficiaries of his sustained assistance and he was more successful than most in placing them in Ph.D. programs and in jobs.

Likewise his colleagues, myself included, could always count on him for time-consuming help. He would read and critique our manuscripts, aid us in securing publishers, give advice only when asked, and teach our classes when we were unavailable. The History Department constantly called on him for services innumerable, and he always delivered. He taught a total of twenty-eight courses during his thirty years here; he served on every regular department committee and many irregular ones; and every department crisis brought his enlistment in efforts to deal with it. All the while he was ceaselessly engaged in research and publication projects, and he had no contenders as the Department's supreme workhorse.

Finally, CSUF often called on him to serve in many capacities, great and small. Among the latter, he always laughingly listed his service as manager of the University's first baseball team. In reality this too was a very time-consuming task which he shouldered with his usual dedication and for which he was remunerated only with "psychic income" to use Jerry Brown's famous phrase. In closing it is appropriate to mention Warren's sense of humor. He had a good one, and despite his attainments, he often engaged in

hilarious self-deprecation. Among the myriad comments about him on student evaluation forms, the overwhelming majority of which were extremely laudatory, his personal favorite was one by a student who granted his excellence but nevertheless felt uncomfortable in his commanding presence. He said, "You're one in a million, Dr. Beck, but I prefer the other 999,999."

As one of the many not sharing this preference, Warren, may I say on their behalf? "Goodbye and Godspeed."

Submitted by  
Jackson K. Putnam  
Professor of History, Emeritus  
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