

GILES T. BROWN

1916-2013

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC  
AFFAIRS, DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND PROFESSOR OF  
HISTORY, EMERITUS

B.A., San Diego State University; M.A., University of California, Berkeley;  
Ph.D., Claremont Graduate School

California State University, Fullerton, From September 1960 to May 1983

Birth: April 21, 1916; Death: December 28, 2013

With the passing of Giles Brown, CSUF lost one of its finest founding faculty. When he joined the campus in 1960 from Orange Coast College, CSUF (then Orange County State College) was still in its organizational and curricular infancy. It had just begun organizing academic divisions—departments would not begin for another year or more. Giles was appointed chairman of the Division of Social Sciences, which had been his position at Orange Coast College, and in 1962 he became the chairman also of the newly-created History Department. He held both positions until late in the 1960s, helping in the development of what for a while were the largest school, Humanities and Social Sciences, and one of the largest departments, History, in the college. Anyone familiar with the tightly-held intellectual independence and territorial distinction between faculty in these disciplines (and often among those in particular departments) can appreciate what an adept herder of cats he was in helping to achieve this organization.

A key to Giles' success as a chairman was his personality. He was one of the nicest people I have ever known. A cheery disposition, a warm smile, and a low key approach to working out differences and problems were his persona. These were manifested in such characteristics as his common greeting "Hello, young man" which remained constant even as his junior colleagues' advancing years made it seem less fitting. Another example was his sending notes of congratulation. Publications, local talks, promotions, participation in civic or academic activities regularly brought a personal note of praise. In the early years, he invited faculty from the whole division to his home in Newport Beach, where we met not only his wife but also his long-time pet monkey. These invitations

continued for the history faculty until the end of his chairmanship and contributed to establishing closer relations among department members.

In the late 1960s, Giles took on the new position of Dean of Graduate Studies. Here he helped shape a different area of academic programs with the establishment of structure and standards for what until then had been a small number of post-baccalaureate programs that each set its own rules and objectives. He helped guarantee that the university's graduate programs were developed within the mandates of the Master Plan, were comparable in requirements and worthy of acceptance in academia and the community. He continued to hold the position of Graduate Dean through the 1970s. Then it was expanded to Associate Vice President for Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. He held this position until his retirement as an emeritus in 1983.

The record of Giles Brown as faculty member and administrator is only part of his contribution to the campus and a broader Orange County community. While at OCC, he had delivered regular lectures on current events, especially international relations. He and his wife regularly went on summer vacations abroad, and he arrived at Fullerton already an authority on many lands. He continued these lectures at OCC through his career at CSUF. He was also active in the Baptist Church and in other community groups in southern Orange County. Unknown to many of his colleagues, he also quietly became one of the campus' most generous donors. Like other accomplishments in his life, he was modest in making them public. Before the end of the century, he was a member of the Ontiveros Society, a campus group of people who gave a million dollars to CSUF. A lasting monument to his work in building the graduate programs is the Giles T. Brown Thesis Award, which he funded. One room in McCarthy Hall bearing his name is an equally modest testimony to these many contributions.

Submitted by

Lawrence B. de Graaf

Professor of History, Emeritus

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