Donald Allen, 92, Book Editor of Bold New Voices in Poetry, Dies

Donald Merriam Allen, a poetry editor whose 1960 anthology of the era’s contemporary and avant-garde poets remains a milestone in American letters, died on August 29, 2004 in San Francisco. He was 92.

His death was announced by his friend and executor, Michael Williams.

Mr. Allen started compiling his landmark collection in 1958 as an editor at Grove Press. In "The New American Poetry: 1945-1960" he presented a new generation. It offered a sampler of 44 young voices arranged in five overlapping groupings, and was one of the first countercultural collections of American verse. The difference between the older traditional voices and the new was described by Robert Lowell as the difference between the "cooked" and the "raw."

The Black Mountain poets like Charles Olson, Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley; the San Francisco renaissance voices of James Broughton, Madeline Gleason and Lawrence Ferlinghetti; the beat generation of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and Gregory Corso; the New York poets like John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch and Frank O’Hara; and a fifth group of younger names without geographical definition, including Philip Whalen and Stuart Z. Perkoff.

Mr. Allen’s handiwork caused a literary stir and upset the poetry establishment in particular. It spotlighted some large new talents culled from small magazines and lent a degree of respectability even to fringe lyricists from San Francisco and its environs.

What united them, Harvey Shapiro noted in his review in the New York Times in 1960, was their disdain for traditional great English and American poetry and poets. More disapprovingly, the critic John Simon wrote, "Mr. Allen’s anthology divides all gall into five parts."

But the work endured and was reissued most recently by the University of California Press, where it remains in print. In 1975 Mr. Allen edited, with Warren Tallman, an updated companion volume to the 1960 anthology, "The Poetics of the New American Poetry" (Grove).

Donald Allen was born in Muscatine, Iowa, the son of a doctor. He graduated in 1934 from the University of Iowa, from which he also received an M.A. in English literature a year later. [He attended the USN JLS/OLS from 1942 to 1943]

After postgraduate studies at the University of California at Berkeley, he moved to New York. He was an editor at Grove from 1950 to 1970, both in New York and later on the West Coast, where he was co-editor of Grove's Evergreen Review, which published Ginsberg's "Howl."

He translated four plays by Eugene Ionesco (Grove, 1958), and his versions of "The Bald Soprano" and "The Lesson" continue to be staged. He edited selections of writings by O'Hara, Olson, Kerouac, Mr. Creeley, Edward Dorn, Jack Spicer and others.

To promote his favorite writers he founded and managed two literary presses, Grey Fox and Four Seasons Foundation, which published the new poetry along with books on philosophy and Buddhism and gay and lesbian literature.

Mr. Allen is survived by a sister, Kathryn Payne of Charlottesville, Va. 

There is a fine interview of Mr. Allen in the upcoming issue. I was never able to find him, sorry to say, until I found this obituary.]

Some Brushes with History: Handling the Japanese Language During WWII

(Cont’d) [at the POW Stockade on Guam, 1945] But the other prisoners I approached were friendly and polite; and talking Japanese with them turned out to be great fun. I enjoyed trying out new words and phrases on them; I also liked to spring outrageous puns (Nihongo is full of homonyms) of my own contriving, some of which were not half bad. At the same time I began striking up an acquaintance with several of the prisoners (including an army major named Yanagi who was a physicist in civilian life and hardly disliked military life), who, like me, were eager for novelties to interrupt the daily routine. My immediate boss, Lieutenant Frank Huggins, a rugged, heavy set, and hedonistic BIJ (Born in Japan) [Frank B. Huggins, Berkeley JLS 1942] who spoke Nihongo fluently, took an indulgent view of my absences from the office. He was bored, too, drank heavily (in our free time we all frequented the Quonset hut housing the officer’s club, where drinks were a dime apiece [puts new meaning to “Brother, can you spare a dime?”]), and sometimes came wearily into the office in the morning, sat down, leaned back, put his hairy legs up on the desk, and slept off hangovers.

On day, out of the blue, came one of those “turning points” that fascinated Mark Twain so much that he wrote an essay in 1910 discussing the turning points in his life. A Navy lieutenant named Robert Morris, a specialist in psychological warfare, who had a desk at one side of the language section, came over to my desk and began quizzing me about the prisoners I had gotten to know in the stockade. “Do you think,” he asked me, “it would be possible to persuade any of them to help out on a project I am trying to devise, if they thought it would shorten the war?” I was almost certain some of them would; the prisoners I knew best, I told Morris, all realized Japan was headed toward defeat and they longed for a speedy end to the war. Morris then explained what the Marianas and the establishment of air bases on Guam, Saipan and Tinian, he noted, our B-29 Superfortresses were beginning to make daily attacks on the home islands. Why not prepare leaflets for some of them to drop, warning inhabitants ahead of time when Japanese cities were going to be hit during the next few days? With the conquest of Iwo Jima, Morris went on, our B-29s had such control of the skies over Japan that advance announcements of their raids would in no way put them in jeopardy and would probably have the psychological effect of dramatizing American
superiority and the futility of Japan’s continued resistance.

Morris’ plan appealed enormously to me. We headed for the POW stockade at once, and I rounded up the POWs I had befriended, about 5 in all, and explained the project to them. As I had expected, they all volunteered to help out; they were enthusiastic about the idea of doing something to help shorten the war. A few days later, Morris handed me the English text which he and one of his associates had prepared for use on the leaflets. (to be cont’d)

From Paul F. Boller, Jr., Memoirs of an Obscure Professor & Other Essays, (Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press, 1992), 38-51.

[Ed. Note: Recent documentaries on the WWII in the Pacific and on the Jet Stream have indicated: 1. attempts to bomb Japan from high altitude inadvertently discovered the Jet Stream, which rendered all bombing from high altitude wildly inaccurate and forced B-29s to bomb from low altitude; 2. to avoid enemy antiaircraft and fighters at low altitude, the B-29s had to attack at night with incendiaries, a move that severely affected the morale of the bomber crews; Hard to tell for sure, now, but could this leaflet effort have been a part of the Air Corps’ effort to address the morale problem of their own bomber crews? Could bomber command have been willing to risk planes and crews dropping warning leaflets only to save enemy lives?]  

Excerpt from:  

Henry F. May  

PROFESSOR OF  

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, 1952-1980

(Cont’d) May: Then finally, we set out from the Philippines for Okinawa. And as far as we could tell by radio and so forth, the Japanese didn’t know about where we were going, although they knew about the fleet, of course. I was on a command ship, which is sort of a communications center with an admiral’s staff, and there were a lot of transports and destroyer escorts. We went through a typhoon and I think one of the little ships founded. Anyway, they bounced up and down an awful lot.

By the way, Okinawa is nominally a county of Japan, and nominally a part of it, then a rather oppressed part. As we got nearer, they issued sheepskins and it began to get rather cold. This was in April [1945]. Then finally we got there. And I remember waking up to a tremendous din of gunfire from our ships and the sight of the landing craft taking off in large numbers.

Lage: Did it appear to be a surprise, then? You’d think the Japanese would have traced the progress of the fleet.

May: What was surprising was, considering where they had been, how far out their perimeter had been. They had been preparing for about a year for a possible attack on Okinawa, and when our people first went ashore they found practically no resistance and were in three hours where they were supposed to be in three days. Then they found that further south there was a very well entrenched line with a lot of underground fortifications and plenty of resistance. And they were stuck there for a long time with an argument between the Navy and the Marines. The Marines wanted to go in and get it over fast, and the Navy and Army were somewhat more deliberate.

In the meantime, we started getting kamikaze attacks every day, sometimes more than once. And these were broadcast, usually calmly, but once the man talking said, “Oh, my god, they’re right overhead,” everybody rushed to one side of the wardroom and [laughs] our smallest machine guns started operating. We painted on our hull after that half of a rising sun, the symbol meant we were half-responsible for shooting down an enemy plane.

My job was interviewing people that were hauled out of the drink, and that was a fascinating job.

Lage: These kamikaze pilots?

May: Yes, sometimes not only on their first operational flight, but their first flight. They had been to resorts with their parents and friends to say goodbye, and they were urged by poems from school girls, found on their persons, to dive bravely on an English or American ship. They had tried to do so. The thing that prevented them mostly was our putting up a dense fog so that some of them, every now and then, came down - having run out of fuel or for other reasons in the water and were hauled out alive. I also went through the effects of some who were dead.

But then, when they had caught somebody, one of the ships that had got him signaled to the command ship. And I was sent out in a small boat with one sailor to steer it, to interview him. Once that was rather scary because it was terribly foggy and at night and we were in danger of being fired at--maybe we were a couple of times--by our own ships. Once we couldn’t find the ship I was supposed to go to, so I came home thinking I’d be in bad trouble. The head of the intelligence unit took me aside and gave me a quite illegal drink of whiskey. That was really the kind of unit it was.

When I found these people, they would be in the brig of the ship, not mistreated. I never saw any prisoner mistreated. I had done some preparation in interrogating in prison camps in Hawaii. Though I know that when the Japanese had the air power at Guadalcanal and so forth some bad things happened. At this point they were treated according to the rules. And this was easy enough because they nearly all talked very freely. The Japanese doctrine was that you absolutely did not surrender. They regarded themselves as dead and would very often tell you details of ships they’d been on, or of districts they’d lived in, or anything you wanted.

I was after one thing in these small-boat expeditions, and that was to find out from which airport in Kyushu the plane had come because that airport would obviously be paid a visit. So I had a kit with a list of those airports. First you’d have to establish the person’s dignity how he had tried to die hitting a ship but then was picked up unconscious from the water that sort of thing.

Lage: So you’d let him go through this kind of validating?

May: Yes. And I suppose, “And now, please have me killed.” And, “Sorry, that’s contrary to our rules.” “Well, then, may I have a cigarette?” "Sure." They didn’t really mean the former, I think-- or maybe they did, I’m not sure. Then they’d almost always open right up and I’d say, "Well, how long did it take you to get down here?" And they’d say, “Well, you must have come from this airport?” "No," they’d say. "Then that one?" When I had it located, the interview was essentially over.

Lage: And you felt it was an honest answer?

May: Oh, yes. The name of the airport was immediately sent back to Pearl Harbor and the place would be bombed. I had absolutely no regrets or stirrings of conscience against this sort of trickery because, after all, they were sinking a lot of ships, more than had been sunk in any Pacific battle so far, although Iwo Jima, which we learned about on the way to Okinawa, had been bloodier in terms of personnel.

So I had, let’s say, reasonable employment. Then when things quieted down, I went ashore and lived in a tent for a while. And that was okay. Then unfortunately I had to leave my, by this time, good friends in Phib Group 12 and was sent to a couple of other ships. This was not an interesting enough experience to bother you with, but I did learn to get along in the Navy and did fairly well to adapt to what it was like. One of the operations I was scheduled to go on--a small island very near Japan--was aborted. I was happy about that. I would certainly have been on the invasion of Japan had there been one. (to be cont’d)


Memoirs  

Of Ari Inouye

My father and mother came to America around the early 1900s. They were born and grew up in adjoining villages in Kyushu,
Japan. Their homes were up in the mountains; my father’s home was nestled in the wooded hills with a river running through their land. Both families grew rice, tea, bamboo, mushrooms and cryptomeria trees for lumber. When I was 11 years old, my parents took my brother, Michinori, and me to visit the parent’s home.

We were able to fish in the nearby river and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We were even able to travel first class on the steamship and made a stop in Hawaii. Although my parents came from well-off farming families, they both left it all to seek their fortune in America. (to be cont’d)

Ari Inouye
USN JLS Sensei, 1942-1946
[Ed. Note: Inouye Sensei and family graciously allowed us to place in The Interpreter. Thanks to Bob Sheeks, as well.]

JLOs Return to Okinawa

In 1990 Uehara Masatoshi invited Pineau, Slaughter and myself to visit Okinawa. Jefferson heard of the visit and joined the party. Looking through the plane’s windows as we were landing at Naha Airport, we saw camera men, people with microphones and a bevy of Okinawan girls with flower bouquets. We assumed they were awaiting the appearance of some dignitaries who were aboard. When we descended from the plane it was apparent that we were the dignitaries. When asked my impression on being back in Okinawa I said that the reception was much better than the one received back in 1945. Uehara drove us to the Harbor View Hotel, the city’s finest. We were installed in deluxe rooms and given a private table in the top floor of the dining room. Uehara escorted us in making the local rounds. We realized that these accommodations and other expenses would have been very expensive, and theorized that Uehara had made a public event of our visit and that his recruits had deep pockets.

We met the governor, the mayor, the chief of police and media people. When a persistent reporter asked me what I would like to enjoy in Okinawa, I reeled off a list of the varieties of sushi I especially liked. At a lunch stop the next day, there was everything I had mentioned. As we drove about the island we visited the place where we had landed on April 1st, 1945: not far away was a used car lot. We proceeded northward to the Motobu Peninsula which was of particular interest since our division had undergone some very heavy fighting to dislodge entrenched Japanese troops.

At the end of the peninsula we stopped in another hotel with a beautiful view. In a lobby souvenir shop, I saw a bottle of liquor with a snake in it, labeled “Habu Sake” (snake sake). The habu is a poisonous snake we were warned about before we landed on the Island. Asked about it, the woman at the counter said that the poison had been removed and it was safe to drink the snake. Intending a joke, I asked if one could eat the snake. Straight-faced, she said that some people do. I told Uehara later that I regretted not having a bottle as a unique souvenir. On one of his later visits to the US, Uehara brought me a bottle. The bottle still sits atop my bar. No one has ever accepted my offer of a shot nor have I popped the cork. One day Uehara told us that we had been invited to dinner by a Miyagi, whose given name I do not recall.

Glenn Nelson
JLS 1944
[R.I.P. Glenn]

William M. Morganroth
OLS (Malay) 1945

Dr. William Mason Morganroth, Sr., 93, of Petersburg, Florida, died peacefully April 5, 2009. He was a great man, loving father, a talented public speaker, and a dedicated teacher. He is survived by his children, Robert Morganroth of Simi Valley, CA; Rebecca Smith of Greenwood, SC, William Morganroth, Jr., of Columbia, SC and Maria Gray of St. Charles, IL; his twin brother Dr. Robert Morganroth of Chapel Hill, NC; eight grandchildren, a great-grandson, and by his longtime friend, Laura Randall. He was preceded in death by his parents Abraham and Jeannette (Mason) Morganroth, his sister Suzanne Olson, and by two daughters, Virginia Morganroth and Amy Gery, both of Colorado.

Born in Akron, Ohio, he was graduated from Akron West High in 1932. He attended the University of Michigan, the University of Colorado, and University of Pittsburgh, but his lifelong love of learning did not end with his college studies. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he attended the Malay Program in the Naval School of Oriental Languages and served his country during WWII. He retired as a Naval Lt. Commander after 27 years of service.

During his teaching career he was blessed to teach at many universities including Colorado, Pittsburgh, Ohio State, South Dakota, California, and South Carolina. His office door was always open to students. He earned a strong classroom and publication record as well as an extensively popular lecturing circuit.

He had an amazing aptitude for mathematics, economics, accounting, finance, anthropology, Latin, French, German, Malay, and philosophy. He was an avid reader who was well versed in topics ranging from French literature to marine biology. His outstanding understanding of written and spoken French and phenomenal production of French vocabulary continued into his nineties.

He was a member of Faith Lutheran Church in West Columbia where he taught the Adult Sunday School class for over 20 years. His religious beliefs were steadfast and he honored God by loving God’s people. His generosity to his family and friends was unending.

Provided by Family & David M. Hays, Editor/Archivist
[Ed. Note: Dr. Morganroth’s serialized memoir was posted in issues #113 - #124. We knew more of his OLS career than most. His humor and eye for the unusual made his story hair-raising and entertaining. We will miss him.]
still stationed in San Diego, he joined the UCLA clinical faculty.

In 1974 Dr. Arthur retired from the Navy with the rank of Captain and joined the full-time medical faculty at UCLA to serve as Professor of Psychiatry, Executive Vice Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, Executive Associate Director of the Neuropsychiatric Institute, and Assistant Dean of the School of Medicine. In 1977 he was also appointed Director and Chief of Staff of the NPI Hospital and Clinics, and Associated Dean for Curricular and Student Affairs.

Dr. Arthur left UCLA in 1979 to become Dean of the School of Medicine, Oregon Health Sciences University, at Portland. In 1983 he returned again to UCLA as Professor of Psychiatry, this time to serve as Chief of Staff at the UCLA affiliated West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, Brentwood Division. He was again appointed Vice Chairman of the UCLA Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, and Assistant Dean of the School of Medicine. He retired in 1988 and moved to St. Augustine, Florida. However, his scholarly bent remained; always devoted to historical studies, he was writing a history of the UCLA School of Medicine when he died.

Throughout his career, Dr. Arthur's contributions to scholarship, research, medical education, hospital direction and academic administration were outstanding. These and other accomplishments earned him a distinguished international reputation. As a clinical investigator he was perhaps best known for his studies in psychiatric disorders among naval personnel, particularly on the relationships of life change and physical stress to performance, health and disease. He received the William C. Porter Award from the American Association of Military Surgeons (1970) and two Presidential Legion of Merit awards (1969 and 1974). Three Schools of Medicine within the University of California system, plus the Oregon Health Sciences University, benefitted from Dr. Arthur's extraordinary qualities of leadership, which inspired students and colleagues alike. A Fellow of many professional organizations and learned societies, he was also an important contributor to medical literature on such topics as psychiatric epidemiology, social psychiatry, medical education, and stress. His book, An Introduction to Social Psychiatry, was widely praised, and translated into German and Italian. Several of Dr. Arthur's poems were published in Perspectives in Biology and Medicine.

One of Ransom Arthur's most beloved avocations was swimming and the development of swimmers. Himself a champion, he also coached many winning teams. He was a founder and chairman of the National AAU Masters Swimming program, and published some 20 articles on swimming-related topics. At the time of his death he was scheduled for induction into the International Swimming Hall of Fame at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in May 1990.

Dr. Arthur was an unusually clear and orderly thinker with a gift for self-expression enhanced by a remarkably rich vocabulary. Furthermore, as a committed bibliophile and an omnivorous reader, he was able to draw upon a far greater store of knowledge than most people ever manage to accumulate. It is said of him that he knew more about hospitals than most administrators, more about medical education than most deans, more about psychiatry than most professors, more about Freud than most psychoanalysts, more about the brain than most neurologists, more about the Navy than most admirals, more about swimming than most coaches, and more about the nineteenth century than most historians.

Dr. Arthur is survived by his wife, Frances Nickolls Arthur of St. Augustine, Florida; two daughters, Jane (Mrs. Kurt) Arthur-Burkart of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Shelley (Mrs. Richard) Quirin of Portland, Oregon; and two grandchildren, Thomas Arthur Quirin and Diana Elizabeth Quirin. His ashes were interred at the Pacific Rim military cemetery in Oahu, Hawaii. A memorial fund in Dr. Arthur's name has been established. It supports the Ransom J. Arthur Book Award which is given each year to the graduating UCLA medical student who best combines the qualities of humanism and scholarship.

Louis Jolyon West
University of California
In Memoriam

[Ed. Note: I found this memorial before, but was unsure whether this was our guy, as it did not mention his WWII service, and he seemed a bit young. With follow-up research, I now believe this is the same Ransom James Arthur, JLS 1944, who was commissioned a USMCR JLO. Who’s Who in America, 1980-81, has this R.J. Arthur serving in the USMCR from 1943-46, as well as having a distinguished post-war Navy career. The Pineau Necrology has him passing in 1989, as well. How many Ransom James Arthurs could there be? By the way, UCLA’s Medical School and the US Masters Swimming, USMS, established awards in his name, which reminds me that I should have a nickel every time I find an award named for a JLS/OLSer. I should do an article on that. I’ll bet I have found 50-75, or more, so far.]

Vincent Canzoneri
String Scholarship

John Ashmead, and Vincent Canzoneri, front row, Otis Cary behind, at the January 13, 1943 JLS graduation in Macky. Pineau, 6.04_01_02, detail, UCBL.

Following service with Navy Intelligence during World War II, Vincent Canzoneri spent much time doing what he loved most: playing the viola. As he and his wife, Helen, moved from place to place, he always found a string quartet wherever they lived. While living in Wichita, he was a longtime member of the symphony board, where his passion for music made him an effective instigator of development and change. He enjoyed playing in student quartets with his three children, two of whom were violinists and one a cellist. For several years, the Canzoneris maintained a strong relationship with Wichita State University through their friendship with Dr. James Ceasar, a distinguished professor of music.

Mr. Canzoneri passed away in January 1978. Soon after, Mrs. Canzoneri established the Vincent Canzoneri String Scholarship to keep his spirit alive in the hearts of those sharing a common appreciation for music.

Belinda Ventes
Wichita State University Foundation

[Ed. Note: In the September 21st, 1940, Wisconsin State Journal, an entry in the schedule of radio broadcasts reads, “Tokyo—7.30 p.m. — “Explanation of Japanese Music,” a talk in English by Vincent Canzoneri. JLS2, 17.84 meg., 16.6 m.” According to a UC Berkeley interview of Elizabeth Huff, founder, of Berkeley’s East Asian Library, Helen Zimmerman, a student of Japanese history, met and married Vincent Canzoneri, a musician studying in Japan. In the August 1937, of The Musical Times, Canzoneri wrote a piece on the international music scene in Tokyo. So those clues go together. Sometimes piecing bits together for these stories is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. He also served in the State Department. In 1952, he was listed with fellow JLS/OLSers as Meloy, Zurhellen, Marfin, Finn, J. Reifsnider, Rolph, Ainsworth, Osborn and Sherman in Japan]

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