

Retirement from the Skidmore College Faculty

Spring 2008



Faculty Meeting
April the Twenty-Fifth
Two Thousand and Eight

Be It Resolved:

The faculty of Skidmore College expresses its profound appreciation and admiration for the following members of the Skidmore faculty who have this year expressed their determination to retire. The faculty further resolves that the following biographical highlights be included in the minutes of the faculty meeting of April 25, 2008 in recognition and celebration of their distinguished service and achievement.



RICHARD (DICK) HINN joined the music faculty at Skidmore in 1981 as a part-time instructor in piano. Upon Ed Hausman's retirement in 1987, Skidmore appointed Dick as a full-time Artist-in-Residence. He was later promoted to Senior Artist-in-Residence and, between 2000 and 2004, served as Department Chair, the only AIR to tackle that responsibility to date. Several key threads have run through Dick's twenty-seven distinguished years at Skidmore: his remarkable gift for pedagogy; his deep professional commitment to the performance and study of 20th-century music; and his generous service to the department, the college, and the wider educational community.

When he first started at Skidmore, Dick was in the midst of his doctoral work at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He had earned his bachelor of music degree from the Eastman school in 1968 and his master of music degree in piano performance from the University of Michigan in 1973. Prior to teaching at Skidmore, Dick had spent three years on the faculty at Wilson College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dick completed his doctorate of musical arts (DMA) in piano pedagogy in 1983, writing a dissertation on "Boston, Dwight, and Pianists: The European Connection."

Dick has been much beloved by his pianist students over the years at Skidmore. Under his gentle, yet demanding, tutelage, some of our most talented students have performed memorable recitals in Filene. Dick has been equally eager to work with students of more modest talent, taking great satisfaction in helping them to experience the joy of developing their musical insights and skills.

As a pianist, Dick has been best known for his passion for the challenging music of the 20th century, both for solo piano and for small chamber ensembles. David Porter says he has had "the great pleasure of performing with Dick on a number of occasions," describing Dick as "a splendid pianist and musician who, among other things, plays Charles Ives' remarkable and daunting Concord Sonata superbly." A colleague from another university expressed deep admiration for a lecture-recital Dick presented about this same "legendary sonata" at a conference. Among Dick's most memorable performances have been collaborative performances of the chamber music of Bartok, Crumb, Schoenberg, and Messiaen. Dick's special gift was to assemble groups of like-minded, adventurous musicians—string or woodwind players, or a second pianist, or even percussionists—and inspire them to

ascend some of the hard granite peaks of the modern chamber repertoire.

Fellow musicians are always struck by Dick's passionate curiosity as it feeds into his preparation for performance. As Chuck Joseph recalls, "No matter what composition he was playing, he always seemed to study it from every angle. He is more than a pianist in that regard. I guess my most vivid memory is that of traveling with Dick to the Yale Music Library—I to look at some materials related to Stravinsky, and Dick to study some sketches of Ives. His interest in such sketches and the seriousness with which he examined them was indicative of the kind of musician he is. He simply wanted to know, for himself, whatever he could about the literature he was performing. Whatever he gained from those studies, he applied to his approach to a performance. I'm not sure any of us yet recognize what a complete musician he is."

Dick epitomizes all that a community like Skidmore values in terms of service, collegiality, and integrity. One colleague described Dick as "the most thoughtful and generous of souls," while another "couldn't think of a kinder man." All recent department Chairs have been grateful for Dick's willingness to do whatever he could for the good of the department. "He has always been the first of our colleagues to volunteer to take on a task," Chuck Joseph recalls, "coming into my classroom to perform, or just helping out with searches, letters, Filene Competition day chores, or whatever was needed." Dick has taken responsibility for all kinds of tasks within the Music Department: he has served frequently as the so-called AIR-Head (the coordinator of the six Artists-in-Residence); has written and rewritten many sections of our performance handbook; and has supervised the dispensing of the Kennedy Freeman lesson fee scholarships.

Dick's wide-ranging and dedicated service on campus committees pioneered a new model for an Artist-in-Residence, that of the valued and respected leader within the all-college governance system. Among other college governance stints, he served on the CFG in the Tad Kuroda era, took two terms on CAFR (which he also chaired), worked multiple terms on the Integrity Board, and recently served on the ad hoc "Working Group" committee that rewrote Part 6 of the Faculty Handbook. In 2000, Dick volunteered to take on the complex and sprawling duties of chairing the Music Department, providing the ultimate evidence of his commitment to service. As an Artist-in-Residence, there was no expectation that he

should take on this responsibility. Characteristically, however, Dick did what he thought needed to be done, not what was expected of him. The department thrived under his four years of guidance, and he led it with great even-handedness through some sensitive and complicated discussions, including reconfiguration and the main phase of design for the Zankel Music Center.

Dick has long served the broader musical community. For many years, he has authored the program notes for the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival at SPAC. He has been a key member of the Music Teachers National Association and its affiliate, the New York State Music Teachers Association (NYSMTA). He took principal responsibility for organizing two of the associations' annual conferences, has assisted with several others, and served as the state archivist. He is currently President-elect, working closely with NYSMTA's leadership, and will continue his labors even in retirement, beginning his two-year term as President in November 2008.

Music has been only one of Dick's two great passions. The other is hiking. During his time at Skidmore, Dick has found time, joined by his wife, Joanne, to conquer all forty-six of the Adirondack high peaks, all thirty-five peaks over 3500 ft. in the Catskills, and has hiked extensively in Newfoundland, on the Northville-Placid trail, in Utah and the Yukon, and along the Haute Route in Europe. As he heads off into retirement, he will have even more time to hike. In July, look for him and Joanne in the Dolomites.

KRIS SZYMBORSKI came to Skidmore College in 1985 as the first Science Librarian, indeed as the first authentic subject specialist to be employed in Scribner Library. He had just finished his MS in Library Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Previously, he had completed two advanced degrees in Poland: an MS in Theoretical Physics at Warsaw University and a PhD in History of Science at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He brought to Skidmore an impressive set of credentials, having already won awards and prizes for his scientific writing in Poland.

It was Kris' charge to develop a rapport with faculty in the sciences, working toward better collaboration with the scientific disciplines and thus improving resources and service for faculty and students alike. Although Kris was working in what was, for him, a new discipline—librarianship—and in a language that was not his native tongue, he established procedures and policies that formed the foundation for librarians interacting with academic departments. Over the years, this solid base has allowed that relationship to grow flexibly as the library profession has itself evolved to accommodate a digital environment. Kris has stayed the course, or, as one member of the Science faculty has said: "Kris has been especially helpful for those of us working on grant proposals and those of us training students in scientific literature search techniques." He has guided the sciences through the transition from extraordinarily expensive print journals to electronic resources. From the early days of mediated searches on DIALOG to the current use of SciFinder, the world of scientific research has been one of the most challenging. Kris has worked one-on-one with many Science majors to help them negotiate these ever more complex and demanding databases

Over the course of his 22 years at Skidmore, Kris has engaged fully in the teaching mission of the college. Unsurprisingly for someone with his rich, multi-faceted background, he was very active in Skidmore's pioneering, interdisciplinary Liberal Studies curriculum. He taught numerous sections of LS I, as well as LS II and LS IV courses on such diverse topics as "War and Science," "The History of Science," and "Rise and Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe."

Kris has also generously worked with many UWW and MALS students, lectured in a number of Skidmore classes on both his scientific and political interests, and designed (and for many years delivered) Scribner Library's LI 100 course on Electronic Information Resources. One student recalls that Dr. Szymborski delivered a course with "an uncommon gentleness of character and critical insight," qualities that Kris' students and colleagues have come to appreciate and respect over the years.

Kris has also been an active citizen of Skidmore College through his regular contributions to Faculty Governance and broader College service. He has been elected or appointed to a host of committees over his years at Skidmore, most notably to the Curriculum, ACC, LSI, UWW, and MALS committees. Kris has also given presentations to Skidmore alums both on and off campus and has participated as well in Science Seminars and numerous Skidmore symposia and conferences. His personal perspective on Eastern Europe often brought a poignant and unique voice to discussions and panels on which he has generously shared his experiences, past and present. His passion for European and American politics is matched only by his fascination with Science, Philosophy, and Psychology.

Most members of our community do not realize that Kris has also continued to write extensively in the popular Polish press, where he is clearly a valued contributor. He has published on a wide variety of issues related to science and society. He has written a monthly column in *Wiedza I Zycie* (Science and Life) and many essays for *Polityka* (Politics); he has also contributed frequently to the weekly magazine, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Electoral Gazette). The acclaim for his work in his homeland is demonstrated by the fact that a passage from one of his articles was used on a national exam required of all high school students in Poland! It was part of the reading comprehension section, and Kris acknowledges that for a brief moment he was a familiar, if unpopular, person among a certain group of Polish adolescents. Furthermore, he has written, contributed to, and reviewed scholarly Polish texts on many diverse topics, including Neurotheology and Evolutionary Psychology. In 1999, he published *Poprawka Z Natury* (Nature Corrected) and he is already anticipating his retirement project, a book entitled *Sex and Empires on evolution and political psychology*.

Kris has built a home away from his native land, and he has embraced his adopted country and its intellectual, political, and philosophical conversations with a passion only matched by his fierce devotion to his family and by the pride he has taken in his daughter's Kasia's (Skidmore '05) accomplishments. Without question, Kris has been a unique and valuable presence within Scribner Library over the past several decades.