

# Afterword. Richard “Jix” Lloyd-Jones: A Biographical Note

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When I visited Jix in October 2014, two days before he died, he was prone on a couch, cared for by hospice, attended by family, and breathing with the help of an oxygen line, but he sat up so quickly and held forth so vigorously—about writing and teaching and colleagues of yore, as well as his Welsh heritage, centuries back—that he seemed capable of lasting for weeks or months or more. He had, after all, survived most of his life with only a small portion of lung, in the wake of bronchiectasis during his late teens. Despite that profound impairment, he was perennially active on numerous professional fronts in the fields of composition, rhetoric, research on writing, and writing pedagogy. And always accessible to colleagues and students no matter how many burdens.

For each of his writing courses, Jix designed a distinctive sequence of assignments, like a theme and variations—such an inventive and influential form of writing instruction that I and other colleagues took up sequencing in our own writing courses. Given his commitment to excellence in teaching, he also developed a special program for training and mentoring graduate teaching assistants. No wonder, then, that in 1970, Bob Scholes and I dedicated *Elements of the Essay* to Jix, referring to him as teacher of teachers, “doctorum doctor.” Throughout his career at the University of Iowa, Jix was so devoted to teaching that he maintained a full course load in the English department while serving as director of undergraduate studies, then as chair of the department, director of the School of Letters, member of Liberal Arts College advisory committees and of the Faculty Senate.

Beyond his varied academic commitments, Jix also took part in major educational projects: during the 1960s, he taught in several federally funded institutes for high school English teachers; during the 1970s, he created a rhetorically based mode of writing assessment for the National Assessment of Educational Progress and oversaw its implementation; during the late-1970s, he helped to launch the Iowa Writing Project for the professional development of Iowa teachers; during the late 1970s and early 1980s, he served as associate director of the NEH Iowa Institute for directors of freshman composition programs at colleges and universities throughout the country. Collaborating with Jix on these and other projects, I often heard him distill his thoughts in striking assertions—“We are our memories.” And provocative questions—“What is going on when not much is going on?”

So much was going on in his professional contributions—as co-author of *Research in Written Composition*, as principal author of “The Students’ Right To Their Own Language,” as chair of the College Conference on Composition and

Communication, as president of the National Council of Teachers of English—it's not surprising that he prized those moments when not much is going on, when the mind is free to take its own course, as it did in the poems he wrote throughout his life. Bearing witness, as in his prose, to the limits and the power of language: "Reporters will tell the facts that lie, / while I will make from lies a lively truth. . ."

Thanks to his influence, many others throughout the country have devoted themselves to research on writing and the teaching of writing.