

Retiring Faculty: Steve Tabachnick

After earning a BA in English Literature and Near Eastern Languages (Hebrew) with distinction from UC Berkeley (1966) and an MA in English Literature from the University of Chicago (1967), Steve Tabachnick earned his PhD in English Literature, with distinction, at the University of Connecticut in 1971. There, he studied under the accomplished historical novelist and translator of Greek and Roman works, Rex Warner, a mentor and then friend who made such a strong impression upon Steve that he, many years later, published his biography under the title, *Fiercer than Tigers: The Life and Works of Rex Warner* (Michigan State University Press, 2002), which, because of the complexity of his subject, took Steve over 10 years to write.

The job market in the U.S. for new PhDs in English Literature in 1971 was similar to today's market, so Steve, taking advantage of his fluency in Hebrew, began his teaching career at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva, Israel, where he spent the next 13 years working through the ranks from Lecturer and Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor. In 1984, after a sabbatical at UCLA, Steve accepted the position of Chair of the English Department at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, where he served until accepting a position as Chair at the University of Oklahoma in 1990. Ten years later, Steve, by now an accomplished scholar and tried and tested academic administrator, then accepted the Chair position here at the University of Memphis, a position he held for eight years.

Prior to his arrival at Memphis in 2000, Steve authored, co-authored, or edited four books, twenty peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters, and twenty-nine book reviews. Most notable of these earlier publications are *The T. E. Lawrence Puzzle* (University of Georgia Press, 1984, reissued in paperback in 2011), *Explorations in Doughty's 'Arabia Deserta'* (University of Georgia Press, 1987, reissued in paperback in 2012), and especially his *Images of Lawrence*, with photos from the collection of Christopher Matheson, which was published for the Lawrence of Arabia centenary in 1988 by Lawrence's own publisher, Jonathan Cape of London. This work not only received excellent reviews in leading U.K. and Commonwealth newspapers, but it has also been translated into German and Japanese.

While Steve's publications during his early career far exceed the productivity of many professors' entire careers, it is his continued and accelerated productivity since 2000 that sets him apart from many of his colleagues. Since 2000, Steve has published thirty five peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews, and authored, edited, or co-edited seven books:

- the aforementioned *Fiercer than Tigers: The Life and Works of Rex Warner* (Michigan State University Press, 2002), with exceptional reviews in *Choice*, *TLS*, *The New England Classical Journal*, *Sewanee Review*, and *Utopian Studies*;
- *Lawrence of Arabia: An Encyclopedia* (Greenwood Press, 2004), with exceptional reviews in *Library Journal*, *British Army Review*, *Military heritage*, *T.E. Notes*, *Reference Reviews*, and *English Literature in Transition: 1880-1920*;

- *Teaching the Graphic Novel* (ed., MLA, 2009) with exceptional reviews in *Library Journal*, *Forum*, *European Comic Review*, and *College Literature*;
- *The Quest for Jewish Belief and Identity in the Graphic Novel* (University of Alabama Press, 2014);
- *Drawn from the Classics: Essays on Graphic Adaptations of Literary Works* (co-edited with one of his PhD students, Esther Saltzman; MacFarland Publishing, 2015)
- *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel* (ed., 2017); and
- *The Cambridge History of the Graphic Novel* (co-ed., 2018).

In addition to his prolific scholarship, Steve has also been a dedicated teacher, teaching a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses, including The Graphic Novel, Contemporary British and Commonwealth Literature, Romanticism, Neglected Literature, British Travel Literature, and many sections of Literary Heritage, among many others. He has supervised multiple PhD students, served formally as an external examiner for the PhD dissertations of four students, directed several BA honors theses as well as several MA theses, and served on several MA, MFA and PhD committees. As he notes on his faculty page, Steve “sees literary criticism, biography, and teaching as interpretive arts and tries to help his students find their own voices and perspectives and instill in them a love of literature.”

In short, for almost 50 years, Steve Tabachnick has made significant contributions to his fields of British Literature and the Graphic Novel; he has sought to instill his love of this literature to the thousands of students who have had the opportunity to learn from him; he has mentored, encouraged, and wisely advised countless numbers of colleagues; he has earned wide-ranging respect from his peers; he has supported many up-and-coming faculty members who would not be where they are today if it were not for his support, and, perhaps most importantly, Steve has made many, many friends who recognize and appreciate his many accomplishments, wisdom, and his passion for learning. Steve, your presence and contributions will be missed by many, and all of us here wish you and Sharon the very best of health and happiness.