
BIO-FEST: A TRIBUTE TO A LONG-LIVED TEACHER

Kennesaw College stands ready to observe its Silver Anniversary, and part of that important event is BIO-FEST, a year-long study and celebration of biography.

The proper anniversary tribute for a college is an observance that celebrates the creativity of the human spirit; the many methods of analysis used in learning, interpreting, and teaching; and the permanent value of institutions and ideas.

Biography focuses directly on the human being as shaper and interpreter. A long-lived teacher whose evaluations are in order, whose portfolio meets any review, and whose record has gained tenure, biography speaks in many voices and offers many perspectives. Therefore, the college has chosen biography as a means by which the Silver Jubilee can assess and appreciate the centrality of teaching.

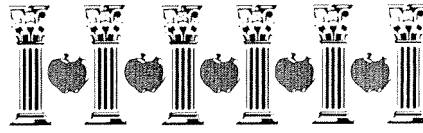
BIO-FEST will begin May 16, 1988, and conclude in May 1989. The opening event will mark the anniversary of James Boswell's meeting Samuel Johnson on May 16, 1763, a meeting that culminated years later in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. In that biography is the record of a man who failed miserably at teaching boys but who became a teacher to millions.

Three main events and several supporting events will mark the joint anniversary — two hundred twenty-five years for Boswell's meeting Johnson and twenty-five years for Kennesaw College:

- May 16 8:00 Address by Irma S. Lustig
- May 17 12:15 Panel discussion with Irma S. Lustig and Justin Kaplan.
- May 17 8:00 Address by Justin Kaplan

Jo Allen Bradham

Associate Professor of English



Professor Lustig was the managing editor of the *Private Papers of James Boswell at Yale, 1975-85* and editor of the two volumes *Boswell, the Applause of the Jury, 1782-1785* and *Boswell, the English Experiment, 1785-1789*. She is a founder of the journal *Biography* and immediate past president of the Auchinleck Society. Her articles on biography appear in the *Modern Language Review*, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America: Studies in Eighteenth-century Culture*, and *Modern Philology*. She has prepared a volume for the Augustan Reprint Society and served as an expert reader for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Professor Lustig will open the conference by talking about the problems and promises that ensued from the legendary meeting of Boswell and Johnson.

Justin Kaplan, who has won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in Arts and Letters for his *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* (1967), and the National Book Award in Biography for *Walt Whitman* (1980), writes and speaks to an international audience on the theory and practice of biography. He is the author "The 'Real Life'" in *Biography as High Adventure* (1986) and an analysis of biography today in the *New York Times Book Review*, April 19, 1987. The *Dictionary of Literary Biography* for 1986 selected him to write the prefatory essay. Mr. Kaplan will speak on

biography today.

During April and May, Continuing Education will sponsor a six-evening series: "Spend an Evening with . . ." Each evening will concentrate on a different figure; each will have as leader a different biographer or student of biography. We can learn by spending an evening with Carson McCullers, with Virginia Spencer Carr as leader; an evening with political biography with George Beggs as leader; an evening with John Hope with LeRoy Davis as leader; an evening with May Sarton with Elizabeth Evans as leader. Another evening will explore the life of an American entrepreneur.

Other events will support the spring 1988 events of BIO-FEST, and during 1988-89, four other main speakers will visit the campus. Faculty members will lead discussion of biography; the Readers' Theatre will present works drawn from biographies, autobiographies, journals, and diaries. Films, book exhibits, and special classes will round out BIO-FEST. A special issue of the *Kennesaw Review* will carry the texts of the six main speakers.

Biography teaches, for to look at it is to know the subject, to know the times, and to know the author. Writers of biography are always within the biography and inseparable from the portrait of the subject. Biography is for analysts of structure, ideas, and style; but biography is also for everyone. It has become the most popular form of reading in America, according to the *New York Times Book Review*. But for those of us who teach at Kennesaw, not the least role of biography is that of being our professional colleague — teacher. ●
