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09/08/2012 - Robert Dorset Graves



Robert Dorset Graves, age 87, a long-time English professor at Chadron State College, died Saturday, Sept. 1 at Crest View Care Center in Chadron.

He was born Oct. 22, 1924 in Austin, Texas, to Booker Samuel and Ethel Gilliland Graves. He grew up in St. Louis and Wellsville, Mo. After graduating from Wellsville High School, he served in the U.S. Navy on a troop transport in the Pacific from 1943 through 1946 during World War II.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Grinnell College in Iowa in 1950 and taught one year at Hicksville High School on Long Island. He was married to Meredith Jane Miler on June 21, 1951, at Mount Vernon, N.Y. They had met while both were attending Grinnell.

Graves earned a master's degree at Duke University in 1954 and spent two years teaching at Idaho State College at Pocatello.

He was working on his doctorate at Duke when he joined the faculty at Chadron State College in 1958. He was appointed chairman of the Division of Language and Literature in 1961, a position he filled for 26 years, or until the college reorganized in 1987 and he became the department head.

Graves retired at Chadron State in 1990, but served as an adjunct faculty member who taught at least one course each semester through the summer of 2005. The following year, a weekly lecture series at the CSC Library was named in his honor.

Through the years, he taught numerous courses other than English, including humanities, philosophy, logic and comparative religion. He often said he would teach Shakespeare without pay, but generously shared those courses with other Shakespearean adherents on the CSC faculty.

A movie buff, Graves particularly loved films of the 1930s, especially Astaire/Rogers musicals. He became a fairly proficient computer user and his consolation for fully retiring was helping care for his youngest grandchild, Aspen.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers.

Immediate Survivors:

Sons: Christopher Dorset Graves of Pocomoke City, Md.; Mark D. Graves and wife Shelley of Chadron, NE.

Grandchildren: Cassie Wilson and husband Sean, Katie Brown, Alex Graves, Maddie Graves, Paul Weisbeck and Aspen Graves.

Nieces: 2

Other survivors, Meredith.

At his request, no memorial services will take place. The family suggests memorials be given to the Chadron Volunteer Fire Department or the Chadron State College Foundation. Donations may be sent to Chamberlain Chapel, PO Box 970, Chadron, NE 69337.

Online condolences can be made at www.chamberlainchapel.com.

Chamberlain Chapel of Chadron is in charge of arrangements.