

KELSIE BROWN HARDER
August 23, 1922 – April 12, 2007

Born on August 23, 1922, on a large farm on Cedar Creek in Pope, Pennsylvania, Kelsie B. Harder was the son of Prince William and Ollie Belle MaGee Harder, and grandson of Confederate Captain William Henry Harder, who was present at the surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox in 1865. He is survived by his wife Louise Marcia Maron Harder, Potsdam and his children Kelsie Terry, Gerald William, Dennis Prince, Frank Maron, Ann Leslie Bedell and Marcia Louise Harder.

Professor Harder was graduated from Perry County High School, Linden, Tennessee in 1939 and from Dickinson Business Institute, Nashville, Tennessee, the same year and was employed as a Cost Clerk by Englert Engineering Company in the same city. In 1942 he was employed by the US War Department and a year later he was selected to attend the War Department's Senior Clerk School, Rock Island, Illinois. In 1947 he resigned his position with the War Department to enter Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. He received his BA in 1950, *magna cum laude*, majoring in English. In 1951 he earned his MA in English, and in 1954 the PhD from the University of Florida.

In 1954 he joined the faculty at Youngstown University as an assistant professor and was promoted to professor of English in 1960. He published widely on American speech, literature, folklore, dialect and onomastics. In 1962 he was awarded a Fulbright Lectureship to teach American literature and linguistics in India at the Universities of Punjab and Kurukshetra. While in India he also lectured for the US Information Service throughout that country. In 1964 he accepted the position of Professor of English and Chair of the English and Drama Department at SUNY Potsdam, and remained there until he taught his last class in 1996. Soon after his arrival at Potsdam he held many positions on learned societies like the American Name Society, the American Society of Geolinguistics, the American dialect Society and numerous others.

He was the author of approximately one thousand articles, reviews, notes, poems, books, chapters in books and introductions to books. His interest in language is seen in his contributions to *The Dictionary of American Regional English* and *Random House Dictionary*. Among his numerous books are *Dictionary of Place Names: United States and Canada*, *Baby Names*, *Names and Their Varieties* and *Oxford Dictionary of American Proverbs*.

Besides his recognition as a distinguished scholar of literature and linguistics, Professor Harder was an outstanding teacher of writing, many of his students becoming major writers (including T. Coraghessan Boyle, Jack De Bellis, Frank Polite, Mark Tursi, Derek Barnett, Anthony Leuzzi and others). He was also active in modern literary circles, including initiating the Star Lake Writing Workshops.

After his retirement Kelsie and his wife Louise traveled extensively, including to Turkey, the Scandinavian countries, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, China, Tibet and

the south Pacific. Although he collected several thousand books, he was not a book collector. He read them. Kelsie was an eclectic person with interests in all learning, but always claimed that his one hobby was the study and teaching of language and literature.

He will be sorely missed by the many colleagues, students and friends he worked with over a career spanning nearly forty years, all of whom revered him and respected his vast erudition.