



Reinhard Mayer died of cancer on Tuesday, December 24th, 2013 in his home in Saratoga Springs, NY. His daughter, Shantia, and friend, Sharon Nolan, were at his side. He was a professor of German Language and Literature, teaching courses in German Philosophy, Music and Literature, Comparative Literature, Translation Theory and Practice, and Holocaust Studies. Friends and colleagues describe him as a gentle man, quietly determined and inventive, who gave generously and colorfully, without concern for reciprocity.

Born in Pforzheim/Baden, Germany on August 1st, 1942, to mother, Wallis (Hartge) Mayer, and father, Roman Mayer, Reinhard immigrated with his parents and older brother to Rhode Island in 1949. Graduating from North Providence High School in 1960 as a most humorous class president and State Champion cross country runner, he continued his education first at the University of Rhode Island and then at Tufts University in Medford, MA. Earning a Fulbright Scholarship brought him to his graduate studies at the Eberhard Karls Universität in Tübingen, Germany. He went on to study and teach at the Freie Universität in West Berlin, completing his PhD at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL in 1978. While in Germany he married Patricia Brink with whom he had a daughter, Shantia, in 1965.

Reinhard happily spent a major part of his career as head of the German Program in the Literature and Languages Division at Bennington College (1973-1994). From there he moved to the German Departments of both Skidmore and Wheaton Colleges, as well as to teaching a diverse array of on-line courses for University Without Walls and New York University. In 2010 he was invited to the University of Illinois to help shape a new Center for Translation Studies. Working with Elizabeth Lowe, mentoring graduate students, and being closely involved with the publishers at Dalkey Press was an extremely satisfying experience for him. As a teacher, mentor, friend, scholar, and thinker, he was widely admired. Continually inspired by and inspiring to his students, he will be greatly missed.

Reinhard had the pleasure of working on and publishing numerous translations throughout his lifetime, the most recent being: "Animation.CH: Vision and Versatility in Swiss Animated Film" in 2011 and "Modern and Contemporary Swiss Poetry" in 2012. His doctoral dissertation was expanded and published as a book, "Fremdlinge im eigenen Haus" by Peter Lang Publishing in 1996.

Of the many professional organizations to which he belonged, he was particularly proud of being appointed by the Executive Council of the MLA to the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (2008-2011). There he argued against the current drift toward corporate expediency in American education.

Reinhard had a great love for theatre and opera. He played a sensitive, soulful harmonica and did a stunning imitation of Jacques Tati's Monsieur Hulot. He loved walking barefoot in the grass on summer mornings, was a surprisingly creative cook, elegant ice skater, and had a vast knowledge of every swimming hole, waterfall, lake, stream, and creek in the greater Southern Vermont area.

He is survived by daughter Shantia Mayer, brother Roger Mayer, sister-in-law Sandra Mayer, cousins Roman Mayer and Edward Mayer, Susanne (Hartge) Zogorski, Brenton Morgenstern, Steven Morgenstern and families, niece Anneliese Mayer and nephew Nickolas Mayer and family Amy, Roman and Luke. There will be a memorial gathering to be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Reinhard's memory to Doctors Without Borders.

