

Jerry Jackson

Jerry Jackson was an assistant professor of philosophy at Western Carolina University from 1982 to 1985. He was killed in a car accident on July 5, 1985. He was thirty years old, had been married for three years, and he and his wife, Toni, had a one year old son. They had just purchased a house.

Jerry received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin. He wrote his dissertation under Edmund Pincoffs on the concept of imaginative sympathy in various ethical theories. He invented several devices for helping students learn philosophy. He devised a Monopoly-like board game for teaching logic, and he would make-up cross-word puzzles to help students learn philosophical terminology. He worked very hard on behalf of his students, and they returned his efforts with their own achievements.

Both Jerry and his wife were very engaging and sociable. They quickly became a part of the university community and also the larger community of Sylva and Cullowhee. Jerry was very athletic; he joined a local softball team sponsored by Parker Paving Company. It is no understatement to say that Jerry was different from the other players. He not only taught at a university, he did not drink or smoke. In spite of these differences, he and Toni were quickly accepted by the other members of the team and their wives and friends. They became good friends with Jimmy and Gypsy Parker, the sponsor of the team.

Jerry's warmth of personality, his honesty, and his intelligence made him an excellent teacher and colleague. Since he died during the summer, many students did not learn about his death until returning for the fall semester. They came to talk with me about him, and I remember from those conversations how deeply they felt their loss.

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