

IN MEMORIUM

Dear Members of the ATWS Extended Family,

By now, most of you have heard about the tragic loss we have suffered. Our beloved founder, Dr. Harold Isaacs, passed away peacefully at home on Friday, July 10 at 3am EST. He was laid to rest on Tuesday, July 14. Last October he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, but (characteristically) he refused to allow the word to be spread so as not to “worry or trouble” others. Until a few days before he died, he was working on the *Journal of Third World Studies*, which he has edited since 1984, and was helping to coordinate plans for the next conference. He knew he would not be there for it, but he wanted everything to go on smoothly without him. Again, characteristically, he was selfless and driven by a larger vision.

Those of you who knew him will understand why I must use multiple superlatives to describe the man and his legacy: a great humanitarian, a visionary, a model and mentor to so many, a loyal friend, a prolific scholar, a dedicated teacher, a gentleman always, a peace-maker, a lover of justice, inspiring, kind-hearted, tireless, and so much more. His impact was incalculable, his influence extensive, given the thousands of students, faculty, scholars, and others he reached over the years. Even better, his influence was absolutely positive. That is, he made his life count for GOOD. If anyone deserves to rest in peace, it is this wonderful man.

By the time I was fortunate enough to land in the Department of History and Political Science at Georgia Southwestern State University, Dr. Isaacs had been there for 25 years. Harry, as I have always called him, was still teaching part-time in the fall of 2014. So he put in almost fifty years of service to GSW and the community before his demise. Our friendship began the moment I met him in the fall of 1990. Inspired by his vision, I quickly joined ATWS as a life member. And I got to know the man very well. Let me tell you a few things about him.

He was born in Newark, New Jersey on December 19, 1936. His father died when he was young, but his mother (a truly lovely lady) lived with Harry and his wife Doris (another incredibly wonderful lady) for years. Both predeceased him, but he now rests between them at Riverside Cemetery in Albany, Georgia. They are all in great company.

Harry loved sports and even played football, basketball, and baseball in high school. As an adult he was an avid golfer. He earned his degrees in history at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa. He taught briefly at the University of Memphis before coming to GSW, which he made his home. His focus was on Latin American history, especially Mexico, but he began to feel that there was a need to make Americans more aware of, and better informed about, the peoples living in all of the Third World, or Developing, countries. Toward that end, he started a Third World in Perspective Program Seminar series at GSW in 1981, which sponsored educational events for the campus and community. In 1983, he founded the Association of Third World Studies, Inc. It was at first a “tough sell” because few people around him understood the need to study these countries or the nearly seventy-five percent of humanity living in them. Against tremendous odds, Harry brought this association to life and made it thrive. And in 1984 he published the first *Journal of Third World Studies*, serving as its general editor until his death.

This issue, dear friends and ATWS family members, is therefore the last issue from Dr. Harold Isaacs. But it must not be the last issue of the *JTWS*. I spent a great deal of time with Harry in doctors’ offices, hospitals, and at home over the past eight months, and I can tell you with certainty that his greatest desire was for ATWS and *JTWS* to continue to flourish. This idea, which has dominated his life since 1981, preoccupied him up to his last day. I know exactly what we who loved Harry Isaacs must do to honor his memory: we must carry the association and the journal into the distant future. We need members to recruit new members; we need people to run for ATWS offices and to discharge their duties of office faithfully; we need to keep the conferences lively, productive, and regular; and we need to work together to promote greater understanding, peace, and justice globally, in fulfillment of the vision of our founder. Yes, family members sometimes disagree and quarrel, but they are always bound by the bonds of kindness and love. We are the family of our founding father, Harold Isaacs, and we must honor his life by preserving his noble dream of a better world through knowledge and understanding, love and kindness.

To Harry, we must say: “Thanks and farewell. Those of us who you inspired will carry on, in your spirit, the work you started so long ago. So rest in peace; you have earned it through your toil and your life well-lived.”

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