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NOVA

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VALE

EMERITUS PROFESSOR ROBERT DAVID MILNS AM

(26 November 1938 - 20 February 2020)

**ALUMNI FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**

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¹ Front cover pottery illustration: Music lesson: teacher (right, inscription: ΣΜΙΚΥΔΟΣ) and his student (left, ΕΥΔΥΜΙΔΕΣ). Between them, a boy (ΤΑΕΜΠΟΜΕΝΟΣ) narrates a text. Attic red-figure hydria, ca. 510 BC. From Vulci.

EDITORIAL - VALE BOB MILNS

ANN SCOTT²

This special issue of *Nova* started out solely as a tribute to the late Emeritus Professor Robert (Bob) Milns AM, who held the Chair of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland for 33 years, from 1970 until his retirement in 2003.

I heard that the Friends of Antiquity had no *Nova* editor and offered to return to be able to record tributes from family, colleagues and friends about Bob's life and work.

So much has happened since I made the offer that I cannot ignore the impact of the current shocks to the entire population as our governments try to make considered decisions about how we should behave in order to minimise the impact on the community in general and our health systems.

I hope that this issue may come into your mailboxes via Australia Post, but the R D Milns Antiquities Museum has agreed that it also be made available through their website: antiquitiesmuseum@uq.edu.au.

Roger and I have already had almost three weeks in self isolation (under stern instruction from our family). Preparing this issue has been a wonderful reminder of all our friends in the Friends of Antiquity, and the combination of erudition and enjoyment offered through its program.

It is only a short time ago that we gathered together to attend the farewell to Bob Milns at Hillstone, St Lucia, to celebrate a life that gave so much to us all.

There is no formal structure to this issue. The tributes I have received are presented in an order which covers the phases in Bob's life. Thanks to Sue Chick's photographic skills I have added some photographs to remind us of good times past.

Bob Milns was one of the longest-serving members of our Friends of Antiquity, an organisation now over 30 years old. Bob served as President and Vice-President of the Friends of Antiquity several times, was one of its Patrons, and a continuous and tireless contributor to, and supporter of, its many activities.

At his side was his wife Lyn, who until 1992 had worked as Classics and Ancient History Departmental Secretary for almost 30 years. Lyn also served in a variety of roles on the Friends of Antiquity Executive, in addition, to being a rock of support to Bob. Bob always ended our FoA meetings by recording his special gratitude to Lyn. It was well deserved praise. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Lyn.

In the pages which follow you will find tributes to Bob from many of his friends and associates. I would like to add my own appreciation of the wide range of experiences that I was exposed to, thanks to Bob's enthusiasm for his subject. Roger and I participated in the first of his overseas tours; I joined Adrian Heyworth-Smith to help with the production of *Nova*, and then succeeded him as editor.

Bob and Lyn were a constant and reliable support in providing copy and meticulous proof-reading - and of course there were Bob's regular 'What's in a Word' column and his 'Poem'. Then there is the vivid memory of being caught with Bob in a lift in the Forgan Smith building for half an hour on our way to an FoA Executive Meeting (on a Sunday, when mechanical help was far away). We resorted to poetry and song. I was heavily outclassed as you can imagine. I only won on technical skills by communicating with the security officer outside, hoping the iPhone battery would last until we were rescued. Which it did, and we were.

Thank you, Bob, for some wonderful memories.

² Dr Ann Scott is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. She served as editor of *Nova* from 2009 to 2019.

CLASSICS AND ANCIENT HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Professor Bob Milns was the third person to hold the Classics chair at the University.

Professor James Lundie Michie was the first. He took up the chair in February 1911 (the year in which the University held its first classes), holding it for 35 years until he died in 1946. Professor Michie was succeeded by Professor Gordon Cooper, who particularly promoted the study of Latin, then a prerequisite for a law degree, which ensured that first year student numbers in Latin were always high. But there was only one Ancient History course offered: a full-year study of the ancient world from the Minoans (15th century BC) to Marcus Aurelius (2nd century AD).

Professor Bob Milns was appointed to the Chair in 1970, at the age of 31. He held the Chair until his retirement at the end of 2003 after 33 years for 24 of these 33 years he also held the position of Dean of Arts, and was a member of the University Senate for 13 years.

Early in his tenure, Bob Milns had the Department renamed as Classics and Ancient History, indicating the importance of Ancient History in its own right as well as acknowledging the very high number of students enrolling in Ancient History. The number of subjects offered was greatly expanded when the University adopted the semester system in 1974.

Professor Milns strongly promoted the Department's outreach to the schools of Queensland and the wide community generally, with the result that the Department and its activities became widely known throughout Queensland. He was active in encouraging a high research profile among both staff and postgraduate students. In this he was helped by having a band of young and enthusiastic colleagues.³

TRIBUTES TO BOB MILNS



BOB MILNS AND CLASSICS: A LOVE STORY (THE EARLY YEARS 1938-1970)

LYN MILNS

Bob was the first born, in November 1938, at Doncaster, Yorkshire, of the five children of James and Dorothy Milns. Two followed Bob, at three-year intervals and, after an eleven-year break, two more a year apart. His early childhood years were spent though the deprivations of WWII, without his father an RAAF pilot, with his mother and his two siblings but spending time also with his paternal grandparents.

Bob's early schooling was at an Intake Junior Mixed school in Doncaster. His particular memories about that period were the enjoyable music classes under the baton of 'Miss Tune' but especially the poor miners' children with their clogs and shaved heads.

³ After Bob Milns was succeeded by Professor Tim Parkin who held it for two years before moving to Manchester University. The Chair remained unfilled until the creation of the Paul Eliadis Chair of Classics and Ancient History, and the appointment of the current incumbent, Professor Alastair Blanshard, in 2014.

Perhaps this latter early impression helped mould his somewhat Spartan attitude to possessions and his political views.

Still in Doncaster and with an addition to the family in the form of his orphaned cousin Jim 10 years older, Bob's Middle School years (1950-56) at Doncaster Grammar (boys only) were somewhat varied: he enjoyed rugby, athletics, cricket but had some difficulty with adhering to the school rules about uniforms (he hated hats – always) and developed an interest in Snooker. For the first two years at least French and Latin were obligatory subjects and at the end of his second year, he was invited to learn Classical Greek and eagerly accepted the challenge. His three "A" level GCE (1956-7) achievements were in Latin, Greek and English literature [by then the family now seven in number had moved to Leeds where Bob was enrolled at the Roundhay High School] in addition to Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. His natural ability with languages was to stand him in good stead later, both at University and beyond.

On the basis of his GCE results, Bob gained a place at Leeds University in 1957, not surprisingly studying Classics, and in July 1960 he was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in Special Studies in the School of Classics. While he enjoyed typical student activities at Leeds, these were years of hard academic endeavour as well as helping the family finances by casual work at British Oxygen (BOC) as storeman and docker and also as a road-ganger during vacations. Even as a child he had cycled around Doncaster suburbs delivering newspapers in order to help out.

As a result of his success at Leeds he won a scholarship – Major Scholar - to Pembroke College, Cambridge University. His casual employment, to supplement his scholarship, was now furniture delivery for Eaden Lilly's in Cambridge. He applied himself with his usual determination and love for his discipline and in 1962 he was admitted to the Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours First Class in Part II of the Classical Tripos, one of only nine to achieve that distinction that year. It was also

during these years that, as a budding academic, he needed to acquire German and Italian – self-taught. Spanish and Modern Greek were to follow later. He was encouraged to proceed to a doctorate but a year earlier Bob and Diana had married, and an academic appointment was the preferred option especially with a baby on the way.

Bob had no difficulty, in the same year, obtaining employment as Assistant Classics Master at Queen Elizabeth Grammar (Boys only) in Wakefield, Yorkshire, and was also the Master in charge of Cross-Country Running, a role he took on also with pleasure because of his own enjoyment of and ability in the sport. As a runner since c. 12, Bob's preferred distance was the Mile, now run as 1500m, and he continued running, over much longer distances until his late 50s.

Just two years later (August 1964), the young family of Bob, Di, Alex had moved to Australia where Bob had been appointed Lecturer in Classics & Ancient History at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW, with the highest recommendations of his supervisors at Cambridge. With a growing publications list, participation in the UNE external studies program, and good teaching skills, Bob progressed quickly, at two-year intervals, from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor.

The Milns family now numbered five with the addition of Nick and Helen during these years (1965 and 1966 respectively), and Bob achieved great success with his celebrated book *Alexander the Great* (Robert Hale, London, 1968), followed by *Spectre of Philip*, with Jack Ellis (Sydney Univ. Press, 1970). It was obvious at this time that Bob was becoming a Philhellene, partly through the people of Greek origin he met in Armidale and through his participation in a movement dedicated to the restoration of democracy in Greece, while not diminishing at all his love of Latin literature and interest in Italian culture. They were good years but with success came more ambition and Bob applied for the vacant Chair of Classics at the University of Queensland and was successful, becoming the youngest Professor appointed at that time to such a

position. Hence the family moved to Brisbane in 1970 when Bob took up the appointment, in August, aged 31.

As Chair he was also Head of Department, a challenging role but one he took up with vigour and enthusiasm. Having ensured that the Department's name became 'Classics and Ancient History' he held the Headship from 1970-80 and 1984-1997; was elected Dean, Faculty of Arts, 1974-7; was elected to Senate 1978-9; 1981-1992. Following his retirement in December 2003, he was awarded the title Professor Emeritus 2004-.

This is the point where acknowledgement must be made of those whom Bob himself always honoured and remembered for a variety of reasons those who had had an impact on his life and development. First his parents and their respective influences through music, literature, debate, ambition, and especially his father's approval of his taking Classics in the 6th form. His orphaned and 10 years older cousin Jim Midgley; his peers at Cambridge whose developed interest in Classical music inspired him as well as Di's musical studies at the Royal College of Music at Manchester; masters at school, lecturers and tutors at Leeds and Cambridge who stood out beyond the rest and who inspired and encouraged him. At Armidale and beyond were John Bishop and Alan Henry. Bob's own keen intellect, research and teaching abilities, administrative skills were at the forefront, however, resulting in his ability in turn to inspire and encourage others of which so many have spoken in their recent tributes to him.

Finally, I wish to quote from Bob's own words (2012):

'The more I learned, I became fascinated with languages in every aspect, e.g. the interrelationship between languages, morphology, development and changes in structure of languages and individual words; use of language as a vehicle for expressing ideas, emotions, and even grammar and syntax. In fact, I've always enjoyed grammar, because grammar is all about how languages work – the basis of the most

efficient and adaptable machine devised by humans.' and:

'I have always made it my aim to take the Classics into the wider community and show both how interesting and how relevant they are in the modern world.'

And he did so, innumerable times over and in memorable ways.'

Footnote

As with others of Bob's acquaintance, I was drawn to his profound mind, wit, love of music, language abilities, his leadership skills, athleticism, love of the outdoors, just to name a few of the traits I admired. He was a truly remarkable human being who taught me many things. Bob and I married in 1977.

Bob's list of honours, his publications, his extramural activities, all reflect his wide-ranging interests and I would be happy to provide a copy of these to anyone who might be interested to know them.

I wish to acknowledge the moving tributes to Bob at the Hillstone St Lucia, Celebration of his Life on 27 February: from Dorothy Watts, Con O'Brien, Alex, Nicholas, Kate, Sam and Richard Milns, as well as the hundreds from those present or unable to be present.

TRIBUTES FROM FORMER COLLEAGUES

A GREAT CLASSICAL SCHOLAR

TREVOR BRYCE⁴

The one thing Bob Milns shared with his predecessor Charles Gordon Cooper was a devotion to the Classical World, most particularly to the study of the Classical languages (though CGC was almost exclusively a Latinist). In other respects, the two men could hardly have been more different. I often wondered what a meeting between them would have been like, but on reflection I think it was a good thing it never took place.

The Dept of Classics (as it then was) badly needed the re-energising sweep of fresh air that Bob amply provided. His vision for the Dept revolutionised it, in ways which were in keeping with major changes that were taking place through the whole University. A research culture hitherto almost totally unknown in the Dept began to develop under Bob's leadership. The former stringent limitations on higher degree programmes imposed by Prof. Cooper were relaxed or discarded, Brian Jones and I became the first enrollees in PhD studies, and publication of one's research in academic journals was strongly encouraged. While much credit for all this is due to Bob, both he and the University had the good fortune of his being appointed at just the right time – *sui temporis*. He was the youngest Professor on campus and had arguably the youngest staff as his colleagues. After an oppressive era in the Dept when academic initiatives by staff were often actively discouraged, Bob's new colleagues were willing to respond enthusiastically to the challenges he encouraged them to undertake.

I use the word 'encouraged' advisedly. Bob had the ability to make you feel good about what you were doing, and to inspire you to move beyond that to do even more – whether it be in the form of taking on higher postgraduate studies, or encouraging your most promising students to do so, or

deepening your own engagement with research, and publishing your results. In keeping with this, and not long after his appointment, Bob was instrumental in having 'Ancient History' added to the Dept's name. The reasons for this were politically as well as academically motivated. But that's another story. Suffice it say that this name-change represented a major break from the past. Professor Cooper used to refer to Ancient history as the mere 'bargain basement' of Classical studies.

In his early years, Bob often dressed informally when he came on campus. For a time he was known by the nickname 'Hot Pants'. This was because of his habit of appearing in his extremely colourful running shorts (bright red, I think) at various meetings immediately after a bout of strenuous exercise. I remember an occasion when one of our external students from the north came to see me, a mature age and very conservative medical specialist. Looking out the window at the Great Court, he said how appalled he was at the terrible way students dressed on campus then. At that point, there was a knock on the door and Bob entered in his 'hot pants'. What else could I do but introduce him as the new Professor of Classics?

Bob's easy manner with whomever he spoke, his outstanding lecturing skills, and his identification with many groups both within the University and the wider community – especially the Greek community – ensured that he was one of the most highly respected and most affectionately regarded persons in the University, Brisbane, and beyond. Though he himself did not publish a great deal, his knowledge of the Greek and Latin language, and the civilisations to which they belonged was profound. In a very traditional sense, he was a great Classical scholar, certainly among the most distinguished in the history of Classical studies in Australia.

But let me also say that much of what Bob achieved was done with the support of a person who will always be part of the Milns

⁴ Trevor Bryce is an Honorary Professor in Classics in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry

story – his wife Lyn. It is simply impossible to over-estimate how important Lyn was to so many of Bob's endeavours. Despite her self-effacing manner, we should never forget this.

REMEMBERING A UNIVERSITY STALWART

ROGER SCOTT⁵

I barely remember meeting Bob Milns in 1976. He was one of a blur of people at a long table charged with finding a successor to the first J. D. Story Professor of Public Administration. The meeting was chaired by Zelman Cowan as VC. I do remember answering questions about the relevance of philosophers like Plato to the study of contemporary government, but that might have been Les Holborow, Professor of Philosophy and President of the Academic Board.

I came to know both Les and Bob once I was in the saddle at UQ about a year later, but neither ever discussed with me the protracted processes associated with my appointment. But Bob and I talked incessantly over many years about a litany of other topics, given Bob's political activism (noted by his son Nick at the celebration of his life at Hillstone) and my amateur meddling with ancient history.

A sharp focus of many of these discussions was the health and future of the University of Queensland. Bob went from being head of a small department and an active member of the staff association to a place near the centres of power as an elected member of Senate and a confidant of senior figures in university administration. His department benefitted from his grasp of the realities of institutional power and he built a linkage with the wider cultural and educational community, a regular figure at Greek events in the city and a continuing inspiration for the teaching profession in secondary education.

Indeed, teaching was his great love and his forte; I never saw an audience he could not sway towards an appreciation of the vitality of his chosen subject. This was true of

gathering of Senate, Academic Board and Staff Association as it was of first year classes of bushy-tailed undergraduates and wizened members of his Classical Greek group at the University of the Third Age.

I shared his enthusiasm both for teaching and for the non-linguistic components of his subject matter. I had studied on the desolate fringes of academia, within sight of the southern aurora. Our classics teachers at the University of Tasmania were all British and thus revered as linguistic wizards in a land where only a handful of Irish Catholics had been taught very basic Latin.

Sensibly, the chief wizard identified that the future for him and his department lay in offering a veneer of cultivation to the local yokels, majors in "ancient civilisations" which could be studied without reference to "dead languages". I found this immensely satisfying and identified a major to be cherished alongside vocational studies in political science and public administration, even an honours thesis topic.

Bob for me epitomised the same wizardry, building a solid base for the department (and later the discipline within a wider school) on this foundation of teaching to a wider audience. Language study remained an essential presence and the key to scholarly advancement but the culture it supported needed to be made widely available for both pragmatic and intellectual reasons. His sponsorship of the antiquities collection is acknowledged elsewhere and the energy he devoted to this aspect of enriching university life will carry this focus on the broad appeal of the classics into future generations.

I left UQ in 1987 for diverse adventures in tertiary and then governmental institutions; the latter landed me back at UQ as a government nominee to the Senate and so I saw Bob in that metier from close range. His close working relationship with both the student representatives and the senior staff helped ease tensions in some tricky situations.

⁵ Roger Scott is an Emeritus Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry

Circumstance drove me back to academe in 1995, as the (last) Dean of Arts at QUT. Suddenly Ancient History was back as one of my mainstream interests, with Arts providing the teaching of subject content for budding teachers. Realising the need to be reacquainted with this first love, I joined the thriving Friends of Antiquity, regularly attended sessions (and gave a couple myself), attended committee meetings and became reacquainted with Bob in that capacity.

The same enthusiasm was shared with my wife Ann. I did a hands-turn as Vice President and then President of the FoA but she took on a decade of editorial work. So both of us saw up close the work Bob did to bridge the FoA's wide constituency of recent and older alumni and the students. Whoever was nominally in leadership roles, it was actually Bob and Lyn who made things happen and led us through the intricacies of intra-organisational relationships within UQ as a whole.

It was natural then that we should have signed on for the first of Bob's wildly successful study tours, starting at the centre of his scholarly universe in the heartland of Alexander and then joining a cruise ship called the Stella Maris, (small enough to be a lifeboat for the giants which have proved so spectacularly unhealthy in the current environment.)

Bob combined a number of roles on this tour and later ones, being organiser, expert guide (capable on occasions of alerting us to the ideological fudging of official local rhetoric) and life and soul of the party. We marvelled at his in-depth knowledge of the diverse locations we visited, as we trudged up a hill in Rhodes or wandered around Delphi. We also marvelled at his stamina and persistent good humour in the face of the occasional challenging personalities which probably characterise every tour group.

And good humour remains the dominant memory for me, where others will cherish his

academic leadership and his community engagement. In both our declining years, Bob and I maintained a routine of bi-monthly lunches with a small group of emeriti to supplement the regular gatherings of the Friends. Near the end, when ever-obliging Lyn was acting as his driver because of his physical incapacity, Bob always was the life and soul of the small party. Even in the cavernous surrounds of an otherwise empty restaurant, his humour and good spirits filled the place with a ray of sunshine. It was ever thus, wherever he was.

SHARED ENCOUNTERS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB MILNS

JOHN HOLMES⁶

For over a half-century, Bob Milns has occupied a significant place in my life as an inspiring scholar, exciting conversationalist and very close friend. I have had the very special privilege of collegial encounters with Bob throughout his Australian academic career, commencing in 1964, on his arrival at the University of New England, some three years after my appointment as Lecturer in Geography. Since then our life courses have been closely aligned. In 1970 Bob was appointed to the Chair in Classics at the University of Queensland a year ahead of my appointment to the Chair in Geography. On my arrival, I benefitted greatly from Bob's informed, candid appraisal of institutional structures, processes and procedures and of the academics and administrators with whom Heads of Departments had to engage. I could not have had a more helpful, informed and insightful colleague.

I recall Bob's role when Dean of Arts in supporting and facilitating the abolition of the language pre-requisite within the B. A. degree. This was an admirable position to take, the more so with its potential adverse outcome for the Classics. The good news is that Classics and Ancient History have

⁶ John Holmes in an Emeritus Professor of Geography in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Queensland.

flourished, largely due to Bob's inspiring leadership.

It is unsurprising that we have both treasured collegial, convivial exchanges over a near-half century at UQ. At times we exchanged banter about my early exit from a potential career as a scholar in classics, given my specialization in languages (Latin, French and German) at Newcastle Boys High (the Australian Newcastle), culminating in second-top Latin position in the Leaving Certificate. In 1947, as a fresher at University of Sydney, I was immediately 'turned off' by the first few lectures, given by the Professor of Classics. I then enrolled in Geography as a fourth 'filler' subject, where I found my capabilities and inclinations to engage in first-hand field observation and interpretation.

If Bob Milns had been Professor of Classics at Sydney in 1947, my career might well have followed a markedly different trajectory.

BOB MILNS - INSPIRATIONAL LECTURER, SUPPORTIVE AND GENEROUS COLLEAGUE

DOROTHY WATTS⁷

I first met Bob in March 1981. I first saw him in action in 1984, when I was teaching in Mackay. He had come up to conduct an AH Day for the district's secondary school students - just one of the many times he had spoken at schools. Over the years such visits have had a profound effect on Classics enrolments: often students would come up to Bob at the University and relate how they had first heard him speak at Toowoomba/Rockhampton/Bundaberg or a local high school, and it was this that had inspired them to enrol.

Bob was indeed an inspirational lecturer, and a supportive and generous colleague from the first day I joined the staff in 1990. Later on in my career when it was my turn to be Head of Department it was Bob to whom I turned for advice. In the early days we didn't

have anti-smoking regulations, and many's the time we shared a "crafty fag" while pondering a knotty problem. Bob of course would break off the first centimetre or so of his cigarette before he lit up, because he was giving up smoking! (We eventually both did, once the University installed air conditioning ...)

Lyn, Bob, Keith and I very quickly became friends and spent many pleasant occasions together. We shared their love of travel, and together managed two memorable train journeys across Australia, one trip to Gaddafi's Libya and three to Europe. Even on these Bob would keep up his fitness program each morning, and Lyn used to make a sortie in the evening before to suss out a suitable running track. This could be quite a distance, and it says much for Lyn's devotion that she undertook this task at every new location. However, there was one occasion in Croatia, I think it was at the stopover at Lake Bled, when this routine was curtailed. In the foyer of the hotel was a very large brown bear, which the hotel staff told us had been caught in the woods quite nearby; it had been stuffed and mounted as a welcoming feature (or maybe a warning) for guests. Understandably, the next morning Bob's run was confined to the car park: it was fenced...

Many other happy memories could be recounted – sailing on Adrian's boat, celebrating birthdays, going to concerts or the cricket, wine tasting, just enjoying Bob's company and the brilliance of his mind and the breadth of his knowledge.

Professor Milns came to the University of Queensland as Professor of Classics in 1970, and retired in 2003. The contribution he made to the University was immeasurable: he was a much loved lecturer and postgraduate supervisor, as well as an inspiring scholar and a loyal and supportive colleague. At various times he held positions as Head of Department, Dean of Arts and member of the Academic Board and the University Senate. Even after his retirement he retained his many links with the University, leading Greek and Latin readings

⁷ Dorothy Watts is an Honorary Research Associate Professor in Classics and Ancient History.

every Friday afternoon with like-minded members of the staff and community. He also continued his strong association with the Alumni Friends, and with the Friends of Antiquity, of which he was a Past President; and he was a Past President and active member of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.

Bob was tireless in his promotion and expansion of the Department's collection of antiquities into Queensland's largest and most comprehensive museum of its kind, and on his retirement the University named the facility the RD Milns Antiquities Museum. It is fitting that Bob's contribution to the University will forever be remembered in this way. It has been a source of pride to the Friends' groups that they have contributed to the collection in the past, and continue to do so.

On many occasions members of the public had the pleasure of hearing Bob give informative and entertaining talks on subjects relating to the ancient world – to schools (he was a Patron of the Queensland History Teachers' Association), service clubs and similar groups. He was the recipient of numerous honours: for his long-term association with the Greek community of Brisbane he received the "Nike" award of the Australian Hellenic Council, and he was made an honorary member of the Orthodox community of St George; his Membership of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 1997 honours list was awarded for a lifetime of service to education, the University and the community, and he also received a Centenary Medal in 2003. The University of Queensland conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* in 2015, a fitting recognition of a lifetime of commitment.

Bob died after enduring a long and debilitating illness, but until the last he refused to give up reading his beloved Greek texts and the preparation of his next talk to what was always an appreciative audience. All who have known and loved him will mourn his passing. We have lost a great scholar, philanthropist, relative and friend.

The world is poorer without him, and Olympus weeps.

JOINING THE DEPARTMENT IN 2003

TOM STEVENSON⁸

I came to UQ in July 2003. In spite of what I had been told at my interview, support for Classics, especially the teaching of Greek and Latin, was at best lukewarm. The Dean at the time told me that we should get rid of Greek and become a Centre of Excellence in Roman Studies. He was genuinely shocked when I told him that I work on Julius Caesar and that the most voluminous sources were Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio, all of whom wrote in Greek. He responded by becoming more blunt about the small numbers of students in the language classes and the patent need for us to join with History, viz. to be amalgamated with our colleagues in History.

He was shocked once more when I spoke of the different intellectual traditions which had given rise to Ancient History and Modern History, and of the different methodologies which each tended to employ, and which I would be reluctant to see swept away at a stroke, even though I have no real objection to (e.g.) broadly conceived thematic courses or (still less) reception courses being offered in conjunction with courses of a more traditional type. The Dean was surprised yet again when I spoke of my individual interest in reception courses based on historical novels and modern cinematic renderings of the ancient world.

In 2006, I became the discipline convenor of Classics, a position I held until the middle of 2013. In the early days in particular, it was not a good time. I had seen Bob Milns retire at the end of 2003 and Tim Parkin leave unexpectedly a couple of years later. We were very few (too few) people / staff and very inexperienced in relative terms. I invited Bob Milns and Dorothy Watts to coffee and told them about some of the pressures facing us in Classics. I wanted their advice. We had just been 'gifted' an appointment by the

⁸ Tom Stevenson is an Associate Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.

Dean, who was trumpeting his support for Classics as a result. But there had been no consultation and, while it was good to have an extra scholar around the place, the pressures remained unabated and hardly relieved. Our very existence was still tenuous. I was worried about how we might get another Chair / Professor of Classics, how we might preserve the Antiquities Museum, and how we might remain a unit of Classics and Ancient History which taught Greek and Latin. [We were no longer a 'department'. According to the Dean, we were a 'discipline', even though Classics is multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and multi-cultural – a realisation which once again surprised him.]

Bob and Dorothy had already been thinking of these things and it seemed to me that they stepped up their efforts to establish and grow the Milns Endowment Fund, increase the level of generosity shown to the Museum (soon to be the R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum), and support research done by Classics staff. In short, they could see that the university's administrators were primarily impressed by contributions of money from the community. Bob, Dorothy, and other friends (in a very real sense) among the Friends of Antiquity visited the then-Vice Chancellor, the Dean, and the Head of School. A breakfast was held at the Greek Club. Ancient History Days broke records for a number of years in a row. Our Friday Seminars attracted audiences which made neighbouring 'disciplines' jealous.

Bob asked how he might support research activity in Classics, knowing that the administrators demanded this, even at a point when there was hardly any time for the small number of Classics staff to turn around in their own space. He came to all the 'department's' research activities, including a succession of weekend conferences and colloquia on topics as diverse as the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (2008), the anniversary of Vespasian's birth (2009), athletes of the ancient Olympics (2012), the anniversary of Augustus' death (2014), polemic in ancient historiography (2015), and the anniversary of Fellini's *Satyricon* (2019), among others. He always supported our

efforts to solicit funds from groups such as the Friends of Antiquity, the Queensland Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the Greek Community, the Australasian Society for Classical Studies, and indeed the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. His diplomacy and genial spirit meant that he spoke warmly with (and about) several administrators, whose attitudes to Classics were not always what one might call supportive. What people really should know, however, is that Bob often supplemented these efforts with envelopes containing amounts of money designed to cover specific costs, such as catering for our conferences. 'You'll be able to use this for ...', he would say to me – always when the two of us were alone. Then he would come to the conference and smile at (and often partake of) the products of his beneficence.

Everyone who came to a Classics activity on Fridays, such as a reading group or seminar or museum exhibition, knew Bob, of course, and everyone who attended our conferences met him, even if they were young scholars recently appointed at another university. I always tried to make sure that they met him because he was a model of particular learning and grace, and because he supported their activities beyond what they knew, and beyond what he let on to most people. His commitment to Classics at UQ remained strong, vital, and even decisive for years after his retirement. We were in a very fragile state for a number of years after 2003.

I think the level of Bob's involvement would surprise even his greatest admirers. Certainly, the contribution of other friends, in conjunction with 'the Friends', has been enormous, but Bob's spirit permeates the place still, as though the walls stand not just because of building materials. He helped me enormously, in many ways, on many levels. I always enjoyed seeing him, I always asked his advice, and I always valued it. Now there is only his example, but as every classicist knows, ancient attitudes and behaviours were maintained through the ongoing contemplation of uplifting exempla.

Vale, Bob.

REQUIEM FOR BOB

JOHN RATCLIFFE

*Bob Milns. Now there was a man to be admired –
Honest, and generous in spirit to a fault.
He achieved a humble greatness few others have achieved.
Our origins and paths were very different,
But our times were very much the same.
He, too, remembered Dan Dare in the Eagle
And the crummy paper on which Beano
And Radio Fun were printed. The need to take
Magic coupons as well as coins to the corner store
To buy the week's supply of Jellybeans,
Bullseyes,
All Sorts, and one Mars Bar, which when
once secreted home
Must be divided assiduously into seven equal parts.*

Bob was an excellent runner and expert Yorkshire bat. I flunked at sport. We both revelled in our books; Bob more to Classics and I to Science.....

Bob remained loyal to the study of the "Classics" to the end even after 'retirement'-- but of course he never really retired— it seems, he just died quietly in his sleep in the early morning when it was time. At home

By contrast, I may never have retired. I just don't know; I just changed gear from studious Medicine to studious Classics, the latter under Bob's superb tutorship. Bob was enormously generous with his time and enthusiasm. But, our conversations were not all about subjunctives and irregular verbs.

Bob and Lyn, Helen and myself became fairly regular diners together at an excellent Indian restaurant in Toowong. Bob liked a mild curry, and we were willing to share it with him for the sake of his witty, crazy ditties interspersed with his many words of wisdom (not always as profound as he had hoped them to appear, but sometimes much more farsighted than many of his friends and colleagues realised). Bob was a vegetarian so what better cuisine could there be than

Indian for any Epicurean? (Please ignore the beans!)

Sadly, Bob in the last ten years or so of his life, suffered from increasingly serious and painful diseases. I was, when younger, an experienced and multifaceted polymath of Medicine and I, like many others, recognised the likely progress and sufferings for Bob in the future. But, I was never 'Bob's doctor' so I was never able to do anything professional for an old friend. I may have broken this rule however, as an old friend by giving him very modest quantities of light beer and less modest quantities of dark chocolate during his last two weeks. These were 'items of diet for the dying' of which I had learned in 1965 when working in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. These 'items of diet for dying' were provided free to any patient by the hospital, if a doctor prescribed them. Of course, Bob would have been tickled pink by the joke, had I felt able to tell him, but of course I couldn't, or more accurately didn't. In retrospect now, he probably would have enjoyed the joke but now is too late for anything for Bob.

As a last example of Bob's generosity to people, the discipline of Classics and wilting scholars, Bob became quite animated when I told him, in February that I had enrolled in a course of Medieval Latin in U3A so that I might study Medieval Medicine.

I had taken some photocopies to his bedside, he spread the papers on his sheets and we discussed them for the best part of an hour. Then I had to go because the nurse had come to give Bob a bed-bath, from which I discreetly withdrew. There are some parts of an old hero that are best left unobserved.

I did see him again, a week later, on the afternoon before he died. He was very tired, weak and in pain. I, of course, knew his end would come soon, so we just exchanged a greeting and a farewell like all good Romans, with a hand shake. I said good bye to Lyn and got a taxi to take me home.

THE R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

LYN MILNS

The event at which the Museum received its present name occurred on 25 February 2007 and was presided over by the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Hay. It was previously known as 'the Antiquities Museum' but, in its infancy and for about 20 years, was known as the 'Collection of Classical Antiquities' (see Don Barrett's use of 'collection' throughout his article). The term 'museum' came into being in the early 1980s when the growing Collection had been housed in several locations and it was decided that some policy decisions needed making concerning its future. Thus the title Director came into being and Bruce Gollan, Lecturer in the Department, was the first to use that title.

Some might recall the Collection's first public location at the 4th level foyer of the Hartley Teakle Building c. 1971-74. When Bob Milns took up his appointment in August 1970 he found the artefacts in two glass display cases housed in his office, having been inherited from his predecessor, Professor Cooper, when the Department was in the Forgan Smith Building. 'These can't stay here', he said and so, in due course, arrangements were made for a long glass fronted display case to be built in an adjacent foyer. When the Department was finally moved to its new accommodation on Level 7 of the Michie Building in 1974/5, the Collection was housed in a West-facing, very hot, stuffy room. When it was finally realised that atmospheric conditions were harming the artefacts, a plea was made for airconditioning to be ducted into the room (the central core of Michie which contained tutorial rooms was airconditioned but nothing else) was eventually acted upon. By now the Collection was growing, thanks to purchases and donations, and following major renovations to one of the core tutorial rooms opposite the Departmental Office, the by now 'Museum' was safely and securely housed.

Two more moves were to follow, to Level 3 and to Level 2, where it stands today. Throughout all the time described above and at each step and certainly until his retirement in 2003, Bob Milns acted to secure from the University funding and accommodation for the artefacts and also promoting it within the University and outside in the community as a cultural treasure of which the University should be proud. [Some might remember Bob's ABC TV presentation of the 1970s 'Presenting the Past'.] Others too, of course, have been involved in making the Museum great: Don Barrett, Max Kanowski, Bruce Gollan (dec'd), Dorothy Watts, Sonia Puttock, Janette McWilliam, James Donaldson and all the curatorial, technical and administrative staff associated with them and the Museum over many years.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE

JAMES DONALDSON⁹

When Ann Scott sent around a call for contributions to an edition of NOVA commemorating Bob Milns' contribution to Classics and Ancient History at UQ and in the wider community, I immediately thought of the Museum's small archive of historic (and more recent) photographs. There were many great images of Bob, and his colleagues, in these photos, and I felt they provided an insight into the Bob we all knew, and in particular, his contribution to the Museum.

I've left the images mostly to speak for themselves, with only limited captions, but would happily receive reminiscences, identifications (and corrections!) via phone or email for us to file away at the Museum.

There is a series of three images, c. 1985, showing the Classics and Ancient History community at UQ attending the unpacking of a large crate of antiquities in the Museum. Bob, as professor and head, is standing to the left with Bruce Gollan, curator. I love

⁹ Manager/Curator, R D Milns Antiquities Museum. I apologise for the script and photographs being separated. It is beyond my technical skills to manage this (Ed).

Bob's expressions in these images! Betty Fletcher is seated on the far right.

Bob with Syd and Mildred Prentice in the Museum. The Prentices were donors and supporters of the Museum for many years. I date this to perhaps late 1980s to early 1990s.

These images are preserved only in negatives and a contact print, but show C&AH staff in the Michie tea room in the early 1990s.

Bob with Elsie Harwood, c. 1997, on the occasion of Elsie's donation of a lovely Rhodian coin in to the collection.



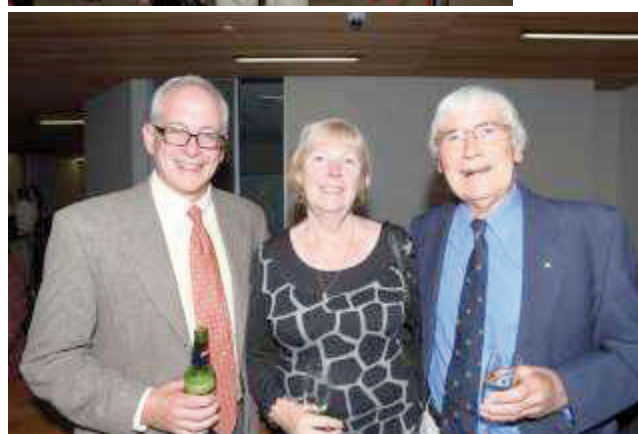
Two images contributed by Rhyl and Rob Hinwood of Bob at Friends of Antiquity gatherings at the Hinwood's in Kenmore in the early 1990s. A reminiscence from Rhyl Hinwood:

"Rob introduced Bob Milns at the Homeric Feast commenting that academia was a piece of cake. He said that when he first took on the role of President of the Friends of Antiquity, he (Rob) received letters addressed to Mr Rob Hinwood. Soon after he was addressed as Mr Hinwood Esquire, then

Dr Hinwood and then Professor Hinwood. He then asked Bob Milns to come forward to welcome the guests. Bob's reply was 'Thank-you Vice Chancellor!'"

Skipping forward to 2012 and a photo of Bob (below) reopening the Museum named in his honour after its major refurbishment.

Thern Bob, Lyn and John Bodel (Brown University) at the opening of "A Study in Stone" at the Museum in 2014. Bob (and Lyn) made sure to be at every Museum event!





Bob with Monica Jackson, Alastair Blanshard and Paul Eliadis at the opening of "Useless Beauty" in 2016.

Bob with Rebecca Georgiou at the opening of "Why Citizenship?" in 2017.

We'll miss Bob's ever-enthusiastic presence at the Museum – he was our greatest supporter. Χαίρε Bob!



IN MEMORY OF BOB MILNS' GREEK AND ROMAN TOURS 2002 – 2013

JULIET O'BRIEN

Anyone attending one of Bob Milns' famous overseas tours, when we chased the Greeks and Romans round the Mediterranean, will most certainly have lasting delightful memories, as I do, of them. Bob's superb attention to detail provided an excellent introduction to this classical inheritance many of us share.

Long before we set off Bob, in conjunction with Rebecca from Atlas Travel at West End, would hold a series of talks to outline the parameters of these well organised and extensive trips. This also provided the opportunity to get to know many of our fellow travellers before we embarked.



**Bob and Lyn Milns
in front of the memorial in front of the Greek Parliament
Building in Athens**

Tours were frequently set at a fast pace as our intrepid leader, Bob, shared many vignettes plus pointing out important landmarks along the way. Following a leisurely breakfast, when we frequently stocked up for lunch, our luggage was stored on the bus and we were off on a day packed full with information, incomparable sites and many additional experiences. Often the day's excursion was followed by further talks from Bob covering something of note from the day - a welcome addition to our aperitif.

Lengthy bus journeys were always punctuated (with agreement from our well-chosen guides) by anecdotes and important details of what we could expect at our next stop. This was my first visit to Greece and it whetted my appetite for further sorties. In

addition to our incomparable leader Bob, Con O'Brien, one of our fellow travellers, kept us entertained with poems and songs pertinent to the occasion as we covered the distances between sites.

I will long remember my first visit to the amphitheatre at Epidavros, where Bob dropped a coin on the stage far below, which we could clearly hear from the top level of seating. He then went on to share something in Greek with us, further demonstrating the clarity of speech from this well-designed theatre from so long ago. (I still wonder why they required the huge amplifiers for the Pop Concert to be performed that night). Finally, Con O'Brien sang 'I am Australian'. I doubt there was a dry eye left in our group - something I would not have missed for anything.



Bob and Lyn Milns
Awaiting departure from the island of Lefkada

From Greece to Crete and Greece to Turkey, Greece and Crete again then Italy, Sicily, France, Spain, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and finally the UK where I saw places I had never visited in the thirty years I lived there. Lasting memories of the varied forts on the Roman Wall and the seemingly endless cathedrals which eventually produced the NABC! 'Not Another Bloody Cathedral'.

Through all these trips, Lyn was there supporting Bob, looking after the well-being of everyone, Bob included. Thank you Lyn - without your quiet input and presence things might not have run so smoothly. You were a perfect partner for our intrepid leader.

One of the lucky few I was able to go on seven of Bob's tours only missing out on the first and his Syria/Jordan/Petra trip. I am indebted to the mind-expanding amount of information Bob shared with us on these ventures. The many different cultures, sites and local foods we were introduced to on each of his tours whetted an appetite for further research and experiences. We felt inspired by his incredible knowledge and obvious love of antiquities.

Many thanks, Bob, for the delightful memories you provided and for sharing with such enthusiasm your knowledge of the Ancient World.

Impossible to replace. Never to be forgotten.
Vale Bob.

BOB MILNS AND THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY

LYN MILNS

On 23 November 1988, the Head of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at UQ, Professor Bob Milns, wrote to all those who were present at or had shown interest in the launch of Friends of Antiquity the previous month, inviting them to attend the First General Meeting of the Friends on Tuesday 6 December at 7.30pm in Room 801 of the Michie Building on campus.

The purposes of that meeting were to elect office bearers and members of committee for the following year and to consider a constitution drafted by Adrian Heyworth-Smith. Bob's opening paragraph stated

The Department is very appreciative of the enthusiastic response you have shown to our joint initiative with the Alumni Association to set up the Friends of Antiquity to support the programmes of the Department Classics and Ancient History and the Antiquities Museum....

The very successful Launch of the Friends, ¹⁰held in the Mayne Hall foyer, had occurred on 20 October and was a resounding success. This special interest group arose partly from negotiations which had taken place several years earlier in particular between Adrian, Bob, and Bruce Gollan, Lecturer in the Department and Director, Antiquities Museum, partly because of the apparent interest of Alumni Association members in donating money towards purchases for the Museum collection.

The very earliest discussions about creating a special fund date to correspondence in October/November 1976 between Richard Hopkins, then President of the Association, and Bob as Head. As a result, and since 1977 a significant number of artefacts have been purchased for the Museum from that fund, the first one being the South Italian-Greek Bronze Helmet. The newly formed Friends of Antiquity in 1988 then commenced its own fund-raising for both the Museum and for the Department.

At the Friends' General Meeting of 6 December 1988, Adrian Heyworth-Smith was elected President. Adrian had long been the main driving force behind the establishment of such a body. Both Bob and Bruce were appointed to the Executive Committee as members ex officio. Bob continued to serve in that capacity until his retirement in 2003 and then became an elected member of committee. He was elected President 2009-2011, served actively as Vice-President for about 11 years and held that position at the time of his death. It should be noted that Pam Rushby is currently the longest continually-serving member of the Committee. In the early years she was also Secretary.

For years Bob has also performed the role of Chair of the Friends' Programme Committee which not only designs the Sunday Series of talks and speakers and makes the necessary arrangements but also the annual Ancient

History Day. Over the years he has been a regular speaker himself at these events and others, e.g. Literary Lunches and social occasions. Indeed he had been scheduled to speak at this year's Ancient History Day and, despite his seriously deteriorating health in December 2019, was starting to prepare his paper. His regular contributions to Nova – his poem and 'What's in a Word' – were always a welcome treat. He was a conscientious attendee at meetings, enjoying especially the conviviality following meetings, and was an excellent Chairman when needed.

In 2010, on the death of Adrian Heyworth-Smith which was during Bob's Presidency, he wrote for Nova a tribute to Adrian entitled 'Ave atque Vale'. They were good friends and that is reflected in the tribute; there also many parallels to be drawn between them and as much as Bob commented in it that the Friends of Antiquity owed much to Adrian, I hope that I have managed to convey in my tribute some idea of how much the Friends of Antiquity owe to Bob in his turn.

BOB AND LYN MILNS, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ALUMNI FRIENDS¹¹

DOROTHY WATTS

The University of Queensland Alumni Friends has had many supporters, but none more dedicated or passionate than Lyn and Bob Milns. ...

With regard to the Alumni Friends, perhaps Bob's greatest contribution was in supporting and promoting the establishment of the Friends of Antiquity, set up by his close friends the late Adrian Heyworth Smith and Dr Steve Papas, among others. Bob has served as a committee member since its inception, and a two-year term as president. He has given many talks to the Friends as

¹⁰ Note: The Alumni Association became The Alumni Friends of The University of Queensland Inc. The Department became the Discipline of Classics & Ancient History. Friends of Antiquity will retain its name when the Alumni Friends Society commences its life in the near future.

¹¹ This provides excerpts from an article that appeared in the *Alumni News* in 2019.



He has also served as president of the (Italian) Dante Alighieri Society.

It is often said that behind every successful man there is a (usually invisible) woman, but in the case of Bob's wife, Lyn, this is only half the story. Lynette Milns (BA Hons, AMusA) is a high achiever in her own right, and has had an even longer association with the University than her husband. After commencing work in Administration in 1962, the following year she became secretary to the Professor of Classics, Gordon Cooper.

On Bob's appointment in 1970 she was able to provide the in-depth knowledge of procedure and personalities necessary for a new incumbent to begin to make his mark. ...

She has also been of great help to the various FoA Presidents in formulating good policy, and her passion has matched Bob's in that she has also served as president and has been a committee member since the formation of the group. The Alumni Friends



part of their Sunday Series and as a speaker at their annual Ancient History Day. His talks to the Three-Score Club for the Alumni Friends are also much appreciated.

The community at large has had the pleasure of hearing Bob speak to schools, service clubs and other groups. As mentioned earlier, his long-standing association with the Greek community earned him the "Niki" award of the Australian Hellenic Council, and he was made an honorary member of the Greek Orthodox Community of St George.



conferred Honorary Life Membership on Lyn in recognition of her contribution.



A reminder of the FOA festivities we enjoyed:
top - L-R: Don Barrett, Steve Papas, Max Kanowski (and Bob);
Pam Rushby, bottom - L-R Jenny Heyworth-Smith, Margaret
Mapp, Desley
Loch, John Ratcliffe, Meg White and Sue Chick.

I am most grateful to the contributors to this special issue,
and to Lynn Milns and Roger Scott for their careful
proofreading.

But I also wish to add a particularly heartfelt thanks to
Katharine Carter of the Alumni Office, and to the Print on
Demand team, who are working under the most unusual
conditions of either home-based work, or virtually empty
offices. When I was editor of Nova I could always count on
them for their support. As always, they have provided it now.

My profound thanks.

