

Tributes Poured in Upon the Announcement of Dr. Ira Edward Aaron's Passing
July 9, 1919 – September 27, 2016

Email from: Donna Alvermann

September 29, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

It is with sadness that I announce Dr. Ira E. Aaron's passing. Please read his obituary and details of the services just announced by his family:

http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/onlineathens/obituary.aspx?n=ira-edward-aaron&pid=181659784&fhid=3592&utm_source=onlineathens&utm_medium=RecentObituaries&utm_term=Image&utm_campaign=Widget

For those of you who knew Dr. Aaron personally, I think you will enjoy the following public blog post written by a close family member:

<http://www.covingtoninnovations.com/michael/blog/1609/index.html#x160928>

For those of you who did not have an opportunity to meet Dr. Ira E. Aaron, you may be interested to learn that he founded the Department of Reading Education at the University of Georgia in the early 1950s. A few years ago, the Departments of Reading Education and Language Education were merged to what is now called the Language and Literacy Education Department.

With sadness but deep respect for the legacy Dr. Aaron leaves behind, I am comforted by the fact his memory will live on in his work in reading instruction and children's literature, and through the many literacy scholars on whose dissertation committees he served.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Alvermann, PhD
Department of Language and Literacy Education

From: David O'Brien

He lived a long life and made a difference in the world. I will never forget when I ran out of money, sort of between paychecks, and Michael Martin said something to Ira. He called me in his office, took out his checkbook, and said, " Well, Dave, someone told me that you might need a little cash. I want you to know that I appreciate how hard you work and you should never have to miss classes because of money." I thanked him, not believing what had just been offered to me but declined the offer and then got some money consulting with the Army with Kent Gustafson et al in instructional design. But when I have told this story to my own doc students over the years, they have said how amazing it is that a

professor would go to that extreme to support students. I have so many vivid, fond memories of Ira. Yes, Donna, I look forward also to catching up with you. Thanks for letting us know.

From: Bob Rickelman

Donna Alvermann asked me to share this with the group, posted yesterday on my Facebook page. I was a doc student in Reading Education from 1980-1983. I still remember a letter I got from Dr. Aaron before I even arrived on campus, expressing his excitement that the Dawgs had just landed Herschel Walker. Wish I had saved it!

A good friend just shared the news of the passing of one of my former mentors and dissertation committee members, Ira Aaron. Many of you in reading education knew, or at least knew about, him. I have many good memories of him. Foremost among them was how well he treated doc students when he was our department chair. He often took us to lunch or invited us to his house to watch his beloved Dawgs play an away football game. Of course, he always attended home games in person. Few people reach his level of achievement in their careers, and probably even fewer do it with the kindness and respect that Dr. Aaron did. Most agree that he was the epitome of a Southern Gentleman. He led a good rich life, and we'll all miss his leadership and friendship.

From: Ken Goodman

Ira Aaron followed me as President of IRA. He was indeed a gentleman dedicated to reading, to his University, to our profession. He represented an era in IRA when it was a platform for all voices - He'll be missed.

From: Gary Moorman

This is such sad news. Ira was a pillar in our profession and an original member of ARF. I was privileged to meet him early in my career and always looked up to him as a role model and mentor. He was always easy to talk to, showed interest in my work and encouraged me as a professional. I will miss him.

From: Don Leu

I am so sorry for your loss at UGA. Ira was a quiet lion in the field. I only met him once, when I had just graduated from Berkeley and give a talk at the Northwest IRA in Seattle. Ira gave the keynote and he used the most marvelous welcome to local Washingtonians that I have ever heard. Washington has many cities with first nation names or other names that are hard to pronounce and typically mark outsiders from insiders by their ability to do so correctly. Ira used a poem with local city names to both welcome local teachers and mark himself, in solidarity, with them. It started something like: "Welcome to everyone from Enumclaw, Hoquiam, and Issaquah; Kalama, Puyallup, and Selah;... etc." I learned an important lesson that day.

From: P. David Pearson

So sad to learn of Ira's passing. I always enjoyed seeing him at IRA. He and I shared a Minnesota legacy, which we were both very proud of. He was, as both Ken and Donna imply, a gentleman and a scholar.

From: Patricia (Patty) Anders

Indeed, Ira was a southern gent, teacher and friend. He was very generous to me. When my son was a little guy, like 3 to 9, Ira gave him a Georgia bulldog t-shirt every year. I was very touched. He will be missed.

From: Jack Cassidy

So, so sorry to hear of Ira's passing. I echo Jim's, Donna's and Ken's words about Ira. What a wonderful person. I was sandwiched between Ken and Ira in the roster of IRA Presidents. As a thirty-something with a relatively new PH.D., I often thought "what am I doing here between these two reading icons (it was still reading in those days)?" Ira never failed to treat me with kindness and respect (which I did not deserve). He will be missed.

From: Victoria (Vicki) Risko

I am so sorry to learn of Dr. Aaron's passing. He was a special literacy leader and a friend. For several years, he was a "surrogate" grandfather to our son during his toddler years and when we would see Ira at the ARF meetings in Florida. They shared a love for children's literature and one year, Ira gave Christopher a Georgia sweatshirt. Christopher loved seeing Ira each year and he loved that sweatshirt. A very special person to be remembered.

From: Ray Reutzel

I, too, was a benefactor of the gentle, generous, and statesmanlike persona of Dr. Ira Aaron. He personified the once popular compliment - "a gentleman and a scholar." Plus I believe he was the only president whose name best represented the organization of which he was to become president – IRA. He will be missed by so many for so many reasons.

From: Robert (Rob) Tierney

I am just catching up on my e-mails and learned about Ira Aaron's passing. I was at Georgia in the wary 70's with Ira and Byron Callaway as my doctoral advisors. As Donna has indicated Ira was a huge supporter of Georgia football...In the seventies, he built UGA's reading department. He worked tirelessly in support of reading in the Southern states..was a major supporter for Right to Read initiatives, a strong advocate for diversity and a powerful force for change. He did not publish extensively, but kept up with developments in the field and made sure Georgia's grad students were exposed to these developments. He supported the hiring of an amazing mix of faculty and a rather motley groups of grad students... Bill Blanton, Jaap Tuinman, Pat Cunningham, Jim Cunningham, Ola Brown, Ernie Dishner, Cynthia Cook to name just a few. Many of us are indebted to him for his contribution to our

graduate studies and for his generous encouragement to engage in diverse ways with reading education.

I'm so sorry to hear of the passing of Ira Aaron. As a native Georgian, I can attest that he had an indelible impact on literacy learning in the State of Georgia and on the field. While in college at Albany State College (now Albany State University, Albany, GA), my professors often referred to Dr. Aaron's research and instructional strategies in preparing us to become good teachers of reading.

From: Yetta Goodman

Ira Aaron was always reaching out to teachers in addition to his own expertise. He led IRA with dignity. He was concerned about classroom teaching, the emotional responses of students to reading instruction and included the reading and promotion of children's and adolescent literature in his presentations and talks with teachers.

From: Paula Schwanenflugel

I remember Ira. We overlapped a year or so, maybe more. I remember had a great smile. 97 years is a great run. He left a lasting legacy.