

**Michael Payne**  
**Recollections on Bucknell University Press**  
**Bucknell University Press Anniversary Celebration Dinner**  
**15 April 2010**

Thank you, Greg, very much for the invitation to be here today to celebrate the history of the Press, and I'm sure we would all agree that we simultaneously celebrate your wonderfully successful and imaginative directorship as well. Greg has asked me to provide some recollections of highlights of work at the Press as I've known it during the past 40 years.

It has been one of my great pleasures as a member of the Bucknell Faculty to have been associated with Bucknell University Press and *Bucknell Review* almost from the time of my arrival in Lewisburg in 1969. Eventually the *Review* and the Press came together, and the *Review* was transformed from a paperback quarterly into hardback volumes that were originally intended to be published twice a year but that could also be purchased as single volumes. At first, like many of my colleagues, I was called up on to read and evaluate manuscripts and to serve on the editorial board of the Press, while also working as associate editor and much later as editor of the *Review*. I served as Director of Bucknell University Press from 1972-1976, when I resigned in order to take my first sabbatical leave and to launch the Bucknell London Semester Program.

For me the key figure during my four years as director was Cynthia Fell, who had the title of "administrative associate" at a time when that designation meant much more than "secretary." Cynthia was thoroughly engaged in all aspects of the Press: handling communication with authors, readers, and editorship— as well as the publishers (Thomas and Julien Yoseloff)—managing the movement of manuscripts from authors to reviewers to the members of the editorial board and on to the production staff in Cranbury, N.J.; and finally orchestrating the always delicate negotiations among all the players: the President's Office and the Faculty at Bucknell, the contributing authors and series editors, and the New Jersey publishers and production staff. Cynthia was my constant mentor, advisor, and sometime analyst. I don't believe that the Press could have survived those earliest years without her. She had an excellent mind, an instinctive sense of academic diplomacy, an elegant prose style, and an infallible nose for scholarly quality or its opposite. I still miss her very much. She was a true colleague. For most of

the four years I was director, Cynthia and I ran the Press office on an annual budget of about \$2,000 (not including her very modest salary). My compensation consisted of an occasional course release, the academic schedule of the English Department permitting, of course.

My chief responsibilities as Director were to carry on the various projects that my predecessor, James Carens, has initiated – his excellent “Irish Writers Series” being the chief of those – and to initiate new publishing projects, especially in my fields of scholarly concentration, which included Shakespeare and the English Renaissance. While I was busily developing connections I had among American and British Shakespeareans, a major publishing opportunity landed quite literally on my doorstep, William B. Hunter’s nine-volume *A Milton Encyclopedia*. One of my English Department colleagues Elizabeth McLaughlin has written an article for this encyclopedia, and she put me in touch with Bill Hunter when their original publisher backed out. This massive project contains entries on all the major aspects of Milton’s life, work, and influence. Although at first we resisted our publisher’s insistence that it be produced in nine separate volumes, we soon saw the wisdom of this decision. This made it possible to produce the book in a way that didn’t tie up the entire production activities of the Press. Even as the first volumes were being published, we recognized that we had a critical and commercial success. (I was later invited to advise the University of Toronto Press on the production of their *Spenser Encyclopedia*. They did theirs in one massive volume, but I think they came to regret that decision. Ironically, I was later informed that they had been the publisher who had backed out of doing *A Milton Encyclopedia*.) During the years the *Milton Encyclopedia* was in production and soon after that, we also produced several excellent books on Milton, John Donne, Marvell, and other 17<sup>th</sup>-century English writers, as one after another of our successful authors led us to others.

Most of my time as director, however, was spent developing our list on Shakespeare and the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which included some innovative publications of Sir Phillip Sidney. Although we published several very good individual books on such topics as *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *King Lear*, and Orson Welles, we also published several pioneering books on what came to be called audience-response criticism, or what the German call reception-aesthetics. Sidney Homan of the University of Florida was key contributor to this effort with a number of books on what he called the stage, the page, and the age: studies of Shakespeare in performance, critical interpretations of the texts of the plays, and the

new historical studies of the cultural poetics of Shakespeare's work. Sid is not only a brilliant Shakespearean, he is also a producer and actor whose range extends from Shakespeare to Beckett, Genet, and Pinter, whose work he also wrote about in several of the books that we published.

Since I first knew of Sid's work through an essay on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that he published in *Bucknell Review* just after I got to Bucknell in 1969, I'd like to conclude these brief remarks by saying a few things about the *Review*, which has evolved through several stages. As I just mentioned, at first it was a paperback quarterly that was eclectic in its subject matter – mainly in the humanities – and modest in its theoretical aspirations. Once it became a hardback Press publication, the *Review* began to reflect new developments in literary and critical theory, as these titles suggest: *Phenomenology, Structuralism, Semiology; New Dimensions in the Humanities and Social Sciences; Women, Literature, Criticism; Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism; Literature and Ideology; Text, Interpretation, Theory*. But even through the early 1980s we were still selecting for publication from what was simply sent to us without doing much to be most assertive in soliciting submission on specific topics. With the approval of our Provost, Frances Fergusson, I was able to schedule – I think it was in 1984 – a review of the *Review* by Arthur Kinney of the Council of Editors on Learned Journals.

His report recommended that we should become independent from our New Jersey publishers (Associated University Presses) and that we should go ahead with our plan to produce volumes more unified in subject matter. At that time I was co-editing the *Review* with my colleague Richard Fleming in the Philosophy Department, and we both were eager to follow up, with our Provost's blessing, on that declaration of independence that we'd been given. The two volumes that we published under the new dispensation were *The Senses of Stanley Cavell* (1989) and *John Cage at Seventy-Five* (1990). Although this third stage in the evolution of the review was short-lived, it now might be seen as laying some of the groundwork for Greg's bold initiatives with the journal *Aperçus* and even more exciting things for the Press that are ahead.

I am very grateful for my long association with the Press and the *Review*, as I am for the generosity of Thomas Yoseloff and son, whose help was essential in getting Bucknell into the business of publishing scholarly books. I am no less grateful to my colleague Professor Mills Edgerton, who succeeded me as Director of the Press and certainly now to my dear friend Professor Greg Clingham, who is making it possible for the Press and

the *Review* to achieve a teleological outcome that had often been glimpsed but only now achieved.

Thank you very much, and as I said to Greg just the other day, may it be our conviction that "Of the making of books let there be no end." ❖