

Editors' Column

We are thrilled to present *Oral Tradition* 26.2, a special issue dedicated with deepest admiration to the journal's editor, John Miles Foley, in celebration of his 65th birthday and 2011 retirement. This surprise Festschrift—conceived and planned entirely without his knowledge—celebrates Foley's tremendous impact on studies in oral tradition through a series of essays contributed by his former and current students from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1979-present) and from NEH Summer Seminars that he has directed (1987-1996).

The issue opens with a foreword by John's friend and colleague, Joseph Falaky Nagy, who eloquently begins the "pleasurable task of paying tribute to a pioneer in the study of oral tradition." Following a brief introduction are fourteen scholarly investigations into a wide range of issues related to oral traditions and the works of verbal art that they engender. Authors include Thomas A. DuBois, Steve Reece, Aaron Phillip Tate, Lori Ann Garner and Kayla M. Miller, Carolyn Higbie, Heather Maring, R. Scott Garner, Michael D. C. Drout, Dave Henderson, Andrew E. Porter, Adam Brooke Davis, Raymond F. Person, Timothy W. Boyd, and Wayne Kraft. Following these full-length and in-depth analyses, an arrangement of eleven essays collectively titled "Further Explorations" is meant to follow John's lead of always pushing scholarship into that next uncharted area for the benefit of specialists and non-specialists alike. Contributors to this cluster include Bonnie D. Irwin, Holly Hobbs, Catherine Quick, Rebecca Richardson Mouser, Claire Schmidt, Peter Ramey, Ruth Knezevich, Sarah Zurhellen, Derek Updegraff, Bruce E. Shields, and Morgan E. Grey. The issue then concludes with a short personal reflection by John Foley's first Ph.D. student, Ward Parks, and an annotated bibliography devoted to the still quickly-expanding body of John's scholarship.

Collectively, these essays explore ancient Greek, Old English, Middle English, Latin, South Slavic, Old Irish, modern Irish, Old Norse, and Hungarian traditions as well as issues related to Biblical Studies, modern media, rhetoric, folk speech, occupational humor, pedagogy, ethnopoetics, and eighteenth-century British literature. This present issue of *Oral Tradition* is thus meant to serve both as a testament of and a tribute to John's tireless dedication to creating truly interdisciplinary dialogue through ground-breaking scholarship, creative collaboration, and generous mentorship.

Not surprisingly, given that John's immeasurable contribution to scholarship is more than matched by his capacity for friendship, this project has received tremendous support from all around the globe, most especially from the dedicated group of contributing authors whose combined efforts give John's Festschrift the distinction of being the largest single *Oral Tradition* issue to date, a compelling statement on the profound influence he has had on us all. We are all enormously grateful to the more than twenty readers and editorial board members, who gave generously of their time and expertise in ensuring the highest quality for the collection during the review process and to the enthusiastic editorial assistants at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition who saw it through publication. Most especially, we are grateful to Managing Editor Justin Arft, IT Manager Mark Jarvis, and of course Anne-Marie Foley, whose creative and loving vision helped propel and sustain this project from its inception. On behalf of all those involved, we express our earnest hope that John will forgive us for hijacking his journal and accept this

Festschrift as our modest but sincere thanks for his mentorship and as a tribute to his impact on studies in oral traditions throughout the world.

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