UC SANTA BARBARA

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Barry Spacks, 1931 - 2014

By all accounts a wise and kind soul who possessed a fierce eloquence and a passion for words, Barry Spacks, UC Santa Barbara professor, Santa Barbara poet laureate, beloved friend and mentor, passed away in January. The flags on campus flew at half-staff on Wednesday, Feb. 12, to acknowledge his passing.

A fixture in the literature department of UCSB's College of Creative Studies as well as the Department of English in the College of Letters & Science for the last three decades, Spacks is remembered for his liveliness and imagination, as well as his constant devotion to poetry and his support of poets, from his teaching and encouragement of his beginner students to wholehearted collaborations with more seasoned wordsmiths.

Spacks was born and reared in Philadelphia, spending some time in the military during his youth. He began his career teaching at MIT and was a member of the faculty at the University of Kentucky before coming to UCSB. His talent and dedication earned him the Distinguished Professor in Humanities award and a place as Santa Barbara's first Poet Laureate, a post he filled from 2005 to 2007. He was also a prolific writer. In addition to publishing a regular column in the Santa Barbara Independent and his own blog, he wrote novels and published 11 poetry collections. That, on top of developing his talent as a librettist, singer-songwriter, artist and actor.

On February 27 at 4 p.m., the College of Creative Studies will hold a tribute to Spacks in the MultiCultural Center, followed by a reception in the CCS Art Gallery.

Following the scheduled speakers, guests will be invited to share a one-minute reading or poem, or a few words in remembrance of Spacks.

A memorial service is also planned for March 9, at 3 p.m. at the Contemporary Arts Forum in Paseo Nuevo in Santa Barbara. An art show in Spacks’s honor will open at the Sullivan Goss Gallery, 7 East Anapamu Street, in April.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.