

KEITH ARTHUR MCDUFFIE



Keith Arthur McDuffie, 92, of Pittsburgh, died peacefully on Thursday, January 9, 2025, after a series of ischemic strokes. He was born February 12, 1932, the middle son of Clair Lee McDuffie and Helen Marie (Yaeger) McDuffie in Spokane, WA. After graduating from Missoula County High School in 1949, he attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, where he received a degree in English in 1954.

After a brief stint in the Army, Keith taught English and Spanish at Edmonds High School in Edmonds, WA, for two years, then headed east. He spent the summers of 1958 and 1959 at the Middlebury College Foreign Language Schools in Middlebury, VT. He later reminisced about the joys and terrors of acting in the Spanish School productions there, playing a befuddled husband in Gregorio Martinez Sierra's play, *Sueño de una noche de Agosto*, and mouthing the lyrics as Don Quijote in Manuel de Falla's chamber opera, *El retablo de Maese Pedro*. Keith spent the 1958-59 academic year in Spain, doing coursework at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid for a masters degree in Spanish, which he received from Middlebury in 1960.

Keith spent the next few years teaching Spanish at Governor Dummer Academy in Byfield, MA, and the Choate School for boys in Wallingford, CT, then left New England and secondary education to teach at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, in 1964. He went on to obtain a PhD in Spanish from the University of Pittsburgh in 1969. He taught at the University of Montana from 1967 to 1974 and chaired the Foreign Languages department there from 1969 to 1974. He went on to chair the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh from 1975 to 1992, and to direct the graduate program in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from 1992 to 1994, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1996.

Keith wrote his dissertation on the Peruvian poet, César Vallejo, whose work was just beginning to be translated and known in the English-speaking world. Throughout his career, he continued to write about Vallejo's work and to review translations, though some of his later research skewed more contemporary. He was especially interested in the telenovelas of Mexico and Brazil, the novels of Manuel Puig, and the contemporary Latin American short story. He enjoyed teaching, particularly graduate courses, and in retirement continued to teach an occasional class through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.

While at Pitt, Keith was actively involved in the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, where he edited the *Revista Iberoamericana* from 1991 to 1996. He was enthusiastic about bringing the Semester at Sea program to Pitt and served as the first academic dean from Pitt on the Spring 1981 voyage and the first Pitt administrative dean on the Spring 1989 voyage, as well as chairing the faculty oversight committee from 1981 to 1991. He was an active member of the University Senate beginning in 1977 and continuing well into his retirement. He served as Vice President during the 1985-86 academic year, and President during the 1995-96 academic year, and served on a variety of committees. He most enjoyed being involved with that of the University Press in 2004.

Above all, Keith loved music. He was an avid concert-goer, and in retirement, finally realized his lifelong ambition to study piano. He'd had a few lessons as a child and could pick out the first few bars of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," but once retired, he took weekly lessons and practiced for a couple of hours every day. He joined a performance group called *Carpe Diem* and their monthly dinner recitals became the center of his social life.

He continued to travel whenever he could, making sojourns to Spain and France, as well as frequent trips to visit friends in Maine and family in Washington state, though as he always said he didn't like to be away from his piano too long. He read widely, cooked creatively, studied French with Duolingo (and submitted suggestions to them on a regular basis, if he found their translations too literal). He was still living alone in his Oakland apartment, driving, shopping and cooking for himself, when he had his first stroke at 90.

He is survived by the children from his first marriage, Anne McDuffie (Tim Wood) and Andrew McDuffie; their mother, Helen McDuffie; and by his grandchildren, Sarah Wood, Tyler Wood, and Olive McDuffie; her mother, Courtney Anderson; and many cousins, nieces and nephews. His second wife, Pamela Bacarisse, preceded him in death; as did his brothers, Clair Lee McDuffie, Jr., and Jon Dale McDuffie.

There will be a Celebration of Life Thursday, March 13, 2025, Kimpton Hotel Monaco, Pittsburgh, 6-9:30 PM.

If you would like to make a charitable donation in Keith's memory, please consider Doctors Without Borders. He was a longtime supporter of their efforts to provide life-saving care in over 70 countries.

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