Edward P.J. Corbett did the same for us with *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. Ed showed how not only classical rhetoric but the history of rhetoric itself is a resource for composition instruction. In the twentieth century, Ed "began classical rhetoric anew."

Seneca the Elder lamented that although his life eclipsed the life of the great Marcus Tullius Cicero, he never heard "the living voice." It was for that reason, wrote Seneca, that he recorded the declamations of his contemporary Romans—so that later generations would have some resource for remembering. Perhaps it was for Seneca's reason that Corbett's students edited those volumes mentioned above. I suspect, however, that what most of us will remember when we think of Edward P.J. Corbett is not only the scholarly accomplishments outlined above but that "living voice" that Seneca alluded to when speaking of Cicero. I remember Ed's unfailingly warm greetings at conventions and the ever-present sparkle in his eye. I remember him coming to 8:00am panels on the history of rhetoric. I even remember how delighted he was when his beloved St. Patrick's Day coincided with a CCCC gathering!

I remember especially the delightful meals we enjoyed at conferences. A group of us would always try to have dinner with Ed at each convention. If dinner plans failed—he was an immensely popular eating companion—there was always breakfast. Both Ed and I are early risers, although I readily admit I never matched his wake-up times! I choose to remember Ed just that way—not saying "Goodbye" but rather warmly greeting each other for breakfast.

I hope that those who read this note but do not know Ed Corbett will begin to understand why it is so important to appreciate the person behind the work. Our discipline—perhaps more than any other—has been blessed by great colleagues who inspire us not only by scholarship but also by their personality. I look forward to the time when we greet each other and, perhaps, have breakfast once again. Until then, I shall continue to remember Edward P.J. Corbett.

\[\text{Texas Christian University}\]
\[\text{Fort Worth, Texas}\]

**Remembering Edward P.J. Corbett**

**Andrea A. Lunsford**

Those entering the field of rhetoric and composition today no doubt can name one or more key texts or moments that have great significance in their professional and scholarly lives. For me, such a key text is Edward P.J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. When it came to my attention, around 1969 or 1970, I was teaching at a community college, struggling to make sense of my
situation and the needs of my students, weary to the point of irritation with what I then called “day-glo” textbooks, reading and writing books focused irrevocably on the feeling, emoting self and full of admonitions to “look into your heart and write.” Since I had absolutely no training in the teaching of composition, and found my heart remarkably empty of such information, imagine my terror upon being asked by my dean to write a series of manuals for our College students—manuals instructing them on how to write essays using the old traditional modes of discourse. I had little choice, so I set to work, looking for what I took to be examples of such discourse, trying to analyze their parts, and then writing up “how to” manuals. Most interesting to me was what I called the “Persuasion Paper,” a manual on which I worked almost all summer. And then imagine my surprise, chagrin, and ultimate delight on reading Ed’s book—and finding out that the little manual I had worked on was the subject of an entire tradition, one I—with my MA in literature and a thesis on William Faulkner—had never even heard of.

Reading Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student changed my life in important ways. It sent me back to graduate school, in direct contradiction of my MA adviser’s admonition (when I asked timidly about pursuing a Ph.D., this person—male, of course, as was every other teacher I had in undergraduate and graduate school—said, “Oh I don’t think you want to do that. You want to go home and have babies.” He didn’t know, and didn’t care, that I couldn’t have babies). It provided a framework for my own early Ph.D. work, when I could use rhetorical principles to sort through the terminologies and ideologies of the various courses I was taking. It informed my teaching then, as it does now.

Yet when I think of Ed, as I have done so often since his death and the wonderfully joyous services held in his memory, I think not so much of this life-changing text, but of the person who wrote the text, of Ed himself. Of course, everyone who knew Edward P. J. Corbett has one favorite Ed story—or more. And certainly, during the twenty-six years of our association, I have had more than ample time to collect a few memories of my own:

*the day Dan Barnes, professor of English and Folklore, introduced me to Ed, telling him that I had been disappointed, on entering Ohio State’s Ph.D. program, to discover that Ed (the person I’d come to Ohio State hoping to study with) wasn’t even teaching a graduate course. Ed shook my hand, looked closely at me, and said “You poor beaten devil! What a crushing blow!” (That was my introduction to Ed’s habit of talking by numbers/cliches, a trait that lives on in many of his students and colleagues.)

*the time I went to see a Peter Sellers Inspector Clouseau movie with Ed, Charlie (Ed’s wife, a wonderful maker of jewelry, pottery, and great Corbett kids), and several colleagues. Ed, who knew most of the lines of the movie by heart, hooted and shouted with such abandon at almost every scene, that the theater manager threatened us all with expulsion. (That was as much fun as I’ve ever had at a movie, before or since.)
the advice Ed offered when I went to see him shortly before the dreaded MLA interview trip I took in December 1976, hoping like so many others for a job offer. “What should I keep most in mind?” I remember asking. Ed put down his pipe, studied me for a moment, and said—with a maddeningly straight face—‘Just try not to drool, dear; try not to drool.” (That was as close as I ever came to striking my mentor and, perhaps not surprisingly, just about the last time I ever asked him for advice!)

These memories come all come from my early association with Ed, when I took a number of independent reading courses (studying, in dizzying succession, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, all the Fathers of the western rhetorical tradition) with him and served as assistant during his editorship of the CCC journal. In the ensuing years, Ed remained a major presence in my life, in exasperating as well as enriching ways. As he was for many other women in the profession, Ed was always my strong supporter, writing countless letters of recommendation, nomination, and so on for me. In fact, only last autumn, at an invited Colloquium on Feminist Rhetorics and Writing Practices, Kathleen Welch, Susan Jarratt, Cheryl Glenn, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and other attendees presented Ed with a small plaque (featuring Diana) in appreciation of his long support of women in rhetoric and composition. On the other hand, Ed was persistently puzzled by the fact that there were “so many women” in the field, and often genuinely puzzled as well at what he took to be undue and extreme efforts to “find” women in the rhetorical tradition.

All that is by way of noting that Ed was, like most of us, a collection of contradictions, full of Burkean incongruities and complexities. To say that I will miss this particular incarnation of complexity is to employ a trope exactly opposite to Ed’s favorite, hyperbole. He spoke whenever possible in superlatives, and he lived in much the same way—with great gusto for each moment. Perhaps that’s why, of all my memories of Ed, one keeps returning:

*the CCC meeting in New Orleans, sometime in the 70s. We were honored with an appearance of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, who played for quite a while and then, by way of departure, snaked around the large room toward the door, playing “When the Saints Come Marching In.” Like many others, I was straining for every note and watching every move: “I didn’t know there was a white player in this band,” I remember thinking. And indeed there was not. But joining in at the end of the line, as the band wound their way to the exit, was Professor Edward P. J. Corbett, playing an imaginary trombone, singing for all he was worth.

Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio