

Henry [Harry] Wallace Decker
Professor of French, *Emeritus*
1923-2015

Henry [Harry] Wallace Decker, Emeritus Professor of French and long-term faculty member of the Department of Literatures and Languages (now Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages) at UC Riverside passed away peacefully at his home on March 6, 2015, at the age of 92. Dr. Decker was born on September 3, 1923, in Orange, New Jersey, to Richard Caton Decker and Helen Smith Decker. He grew up in New Rochelle, NY, and served in the 104th Infantry Division in Europe from 1942 to 1945. After the war he married Jane Munro Hancock, and earned a PhD in Romance Languages at the University of Michigan.

Professor Decker joined the faculty of the French Department at UC Riverside in 1955, serving as Chair for many years. He also served as Chair of the Interdepartmental Program in Linguistics.

As a scholar and pedagogue, his field was French linguistics. His major work was *Pure Poetry, 1925-1930. Theory and Debates in France* (University of California, Publications in Modern Philology, volume 64, 1962). Dr. Decker drew on his expertise in French language and literature to help students learn the French language. His work included coauthoring two pedagogical books with Françoise Bernard, *Modern French: First Course* (1968) and *Modern French: Intermediate* (1967). Among his articles was a pioneering piece on "Computer-aided Instruction in French Syntax" in *The Modern Language Journal* (1976) and an article on "*Pas de café, merci: Partitive or Preposition*" in *Language Teaching* (1977). He also co-authored an article with David Kronenfeld in UC Riverside's Department of Anthropology on "Structuralism" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1979).

Dr. Decker was a cooperating faculty member in the Department of Anthropology, where he regularly helped students working on aspects of linguistic anthropology.

After his retirement in 1991, Dr. Decker continued to mentor and support students as an undergraduate advisor in the Dean's Office of the UCR College of Humanities and Social Sciences. He also wrote a memoir about his experiences in the Second World War.

Dr. Decker was predeceased by his wife, Jane, his parents, and his brother Richard Caton Decker, Jr. He is survived by his sister, Ruth Decker Steen, a niece, three nephews, and eight grandnieces and nephews. He was interred at Riverside National Cemetery.

Adapted by Katja M. Guenther from obituaries circulated by the Dean's Office of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at UCR and posted on Legacy.com.