

A FESTSCHRIFT FOR THOMAS M. HESS

ON THE OCCASION OF

HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY



Thom Hess in his office at the University of Victoria in 2001
(Photo: Grażyna J. Rowicka)

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DAVID BECK (ED.)



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Foreword

In the academic world there are those whose careers are measured by the theoretical thunder they create, or the invariably short-lived splash they make as they plunge into the pool of academic publication, conferences, and controversies. And then there are those whose impact on the field and the world at large is measured by the enduring effects they have had on those around them—their colleagues, students, consultants, and the speech communities they worked in. Thom Hess belongs squarely in the latter group. In his own quiet way, Thom helped to make the field of Salishan and Northwest Coast linguistics what it is today, and the number of people who have stepped forward to contribute to this volume bear witness to the enviable reputation that he has earned amongst his colleagues for modesty and generosity, a keen mind, and a gentle tongue. As one of the myriad students over the years inspired by Thom (many of whom, like myself, went on to become collaborators and colleagues), I can vouch firsthand for his skills as a teacher and communicator, and for the elan and enthusiasm he conveyed, in the classroom and in person, for language and linguistics. I took my first linguistics course from Thom, and, like so many, I never did get over it. When I went back, many years later, to study linguistics as a graduate degree, it was only to have Thom infect me again, this time with his love for Salishan languages and linguistic fieldwork.

It is, of course, in these last two realms that Thom's career will have its most profound effect, one much more important and long-lasting than his influences on the parochial world of academia. The time and dedication that Thom gave to the speakers and speech communities of the languages he worked with are matchless: future generations of speakers are forever in his debt. Thom spent years working with Salishan and Wakashan groups, both in documentation and the creation of pedagogical materials. This is particularly so for Lushootseed, the language he worked with since the beginning of his career. Without his efforts, Lushootseed might well have joined the ranks of languages that have disappeared with hardly a trace. Instead, it is now one of the best-documented of the Salishan languages, and boasts an extensive collection of recordings and transcriptions, two good dictionaries, and a set of beautiful pedagogical readers with accompanying grammatical materials. Thom's work with the Lushootseed community is and will remain a model

for the rest of us working with endangered and dying languages, and reminds us that there is something that can be done by those willing and able to take on the responsibility.

Sadly, Thom passed away in the early morning hours of Thursday, August 27, 2009, after a long battle with cancer. Thus, this Festschrift, originally intended to honour Thom's 70th birthday, takes on a certain poignancy for those of us who knew and admired him. We can no longer offer it to Thom—instead we offer it for him, as a way for all of us who have contributed to the volume to pay our respects in that peculiar manner that academics have. Thom was the best of us, and he will be missed.

— *David Beck, September 2009*

Acknowledgements

A volume like this is a labour of love, and so the first people to be acknowledged should be the authors themselves, who put the time and effort into producing, revising, and proof-reading their papers. Many of the authors were also reviewers for other's papers, as were many people not included in this volume—Patrick Bolger, Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Henry Davis, Brent Galloway, Dwight Gardiner, Sharon Hargus, Yvonne Lam, George Lang, Adam Werle, Andrea Wilhelm, and a few others who chose to remain anonymous. Thanks for other forms of support go out to Cecil Brown and Gary Holton. At the early stages of this project, the assistance of Grażyna Rowicka was invaluable both in rounding up contributors, dealing with the first rounds of e-mail correspondence, and putting together the abstract booklet, which we were able to present to Thom on a date much closer to the birthday we wanted to honour. Grażyna was also responsible for securing permission from Randy Capoeman to use his art in the illustrations for the abstract booklet and the cover art for this volume. My thanks go out to all of these people for their time and efforts.

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