

Thoughts on William Sibley

Dear Everyone,

I very much regret that I am unable to attend this gathering to remember Bill. Bill's death came as a shock that I still carry. As Norma knows, I became alarmed when earlier last year he didn't answer my phone calls and letters, so I contacted the EALC. That might have been a premonition of some sort, but I was glad that as a result of that, Bill called me in Minnesota and we were able to have our last conversation over the phone in March.

Bill oversaw all of my life in Chicago. He wrote a long letter to me in 1993 when I inquired about the EALC from Japan, about doing graduate studies there. He took me for a walk in Jackson Park a few days after I arrived in Chicago. When I graduated from Chicago in December of 2001, he took me and my wife to an Italian restaurant downtown to congratulate me. He was supportive and encouraging to me both personally and publicly throughout these years, and my present life and career would have been impossible without his presence.

As I wrote to him when he retired in 2001, he was always ready to look past my mistakes to encourage what was best or most promising in me, what still might be. As such, he will always remain my role model as I carry out my teaching, talking with my students and grading their papers.

By chance my 7 year-old daughter enrolled in a Minnesotan public elementary school called Sibley two years ago which she presently attends. I still remember feeling lucky when I found the name out, thinking that Bill's guardianship has now extended over to my daughter.

My thoughts are with all of you at this gathering.

Sincerely,
Noboru Tomonari (1994)

Carleton College