



## Kenneth Vance Watson

October 4, 1952 - January 18, 2013

A memorial service will be held Saturday, January 26, 2:00 at the Peck House on the University of Southern Mississippi Campus for Dr. Kenneth Vance Watson, who died of heart failure at home on January 18. A professor of nineteenth-century British literature, Watson joined the USM English faculty in 1986. Born October 4, 1952 in Bellows Falls, Vermont, Watson attended Deerfield Academy and took an A.B. at Kenyon College. He earned his master's degree at the University of Vermont, and his doctorate in English at Duke University.

People knew Professor Watson as a gifted conversationalist and elegant figure who could discuss intelligently the intricacies of Shakespeare as easily as topics from art to jazz to zombies. An accomplished cook, avid reader, and talented wordsmith, Watson entertained friends, students, and travelers at his home.

Many students and faculty recall a dedicated teacher and advisor. Ken, as he was called by friends, enjoyed reciting from memory the poetry of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Eliot, and Pound. He delighted in the life of the mind and in engaging students, friends, and colleagues in discussing literature. He was admired as an inspirational teacher. Ken mentored many aspiring scholars and leaves behind a legacy of students who have gone on to successful careers in law, academia, and the arts. Many of his students remained friends with Ken, forming relationships that have spanned decades.

Dr. Watson was an accomplished scholar of poetry. He served for a number of years as the Associate Editor of *The Southern Quarterly* and recently co-edited *The Past Is Not Dead: Essays from the Southern Quarterly* and an issue of the journal that showcased contemporary Southern poets. He also translated poet Jean Carlos Galeano's *Folktales of the Amazon*, and he published essays on Romantic poetry.

Amid his rich life, Ken's greatest joy was his son Caleb and the delight he took in being Caleb's father.

Preceded in death by his own father, John Watson, Ken is survived by his son, Caleb Watson; by his mother, Priscilla Watson; as well as his sister, Virginia Watson, and her two daughters, Abby and Suzanne.

Donations for a memorial fund may be made through the English Department at (601) 266-4319.

The Peck House is located at 3601 Pearl Street

# Events

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**JAN**   **Service**                      02:00PM

**26**

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Peck House

3601 Pearl Street, Hattiesburg, MS, US

# Comments

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“ I am so sad to learn of Ken's untimely demise. We were close friends and in the same HS. graduating class at Vermont Academy, and at UVM where he got his Masters degree. It was great having a classmate and friend who also loved poetry. On the surface, Ken could seem snobby in his teen years, and yet underneath he was incredibly sensitive and kind, he was respected by all because of his great intellect. We had some wonderful youthful misadventures, I've always thought about him fondly, and had been thinking about getting in touch for some time... Alas, too late. Ken, to quote Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" and you will be remembered by me as such. Your friendship was a real gift to me. Sleep well good Knight! My condolences to the Watson family. Pete Campbell, Brooklyn, New York.

**peter campbell** - March 13, 2013 at 11:41 AM