

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2010

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Harry Willson, 1932-2010

FAREWELL TO HARRY WILLSON
Author, Publisher, Philosopher, Peace Activist

Harry Willson, co-founder of Amador Publishers and prolific writer of fiction, satire, social commentary and philosophy died on Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at the age of 77. His published works, the novels *A WORLD FOR THE MEEK*, *SOULS AND CELLS REMEMBER*, and *THIS'LL KILL YA*; short story collections *DUKE CITY TALES* and *VERMIN AND OTHER ENDANGERED SPECIES*; and non-fiction *FREEDOM FROM GOD* and *MYTH AND MORTALITY*, attracted a diverse and enthusiastic audience. In addition, Harry wrote a monthly column for the Amador Publishers web site—totaling more than 150 essays over the years—and he was published in a variety of local and national periodicals. Readers frequently corresponded with Harry, letting let him know how they were personally touched by his writing; some claimed he had changed their lives.

Harry's ability to put big, difficult subjects into personal terms with plain-spoken clarity, wry humor and abiding love led some to label his writing "folksy" and "homespun," but this belies his impressive academic credentials and professional accomplishments, not to mention some heroic life experiences "walking the talk" of a dedicated activist for peace, social equality, and environmental protection.

Harry Willson received a B.A. in chemistry and math at Lafayette College, Easton, PA, 1953 [summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa], and an M.Dv. [Master of Divinity] in ancient mid-east language and literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. He became bilingual through one year of Spanish Studies at the University of Madrid, and later studied Spanish, literature, philosophy, mythology and theater arts at the University of New Mexico. He holds the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* from the University of Salamanca. He served as student pastor at the Presbyterian Church, Hamburg, NJ, for four years while in seminary. In 1958 Harry moved his family to New Mexico, where he served as bi-lingual missionary pastor in Bernalillo, Alameda and Placitas for eight years. He served as Permanent Clerk of the Presbytery of Rio Grande, Chairman of Enlistments and Candidates, Chairman of the Commission on Race, and Moderator of the Presbytery. In 1965 Harry answered Dr. Martin Luther King's call for clergy to go to Selma, Alabama to assist in voter registration and demonstrations against police brutality in the wake of "Bloody Sunday." He participated in the successful march from Selma to Montgomery on March 25, where he personally witnessed Dr. King deliver his "How Long, Not Long" speech. Not long after that, in 1966, Harry left the church "in sorrow and anger" over their failure to take a stand against the Vietnam War. After quitting the clergy, Harry taught for ten years, at the Albuquerque Academy and at Sandia Preparatory School, then retired from teaching to devote himself to his writing. In 1986 Harry and his wife Adela Amador founded Amador Publishers, dedicating their press to "peace, equality, respect for all cultures and preservation of the biosphere." They quickly set about fulfilling that mission.

March 12, 2010

FAREWELL TO HARRY WILLSON

Pg. 2 of 2

In addition to publishing Harry's books, the press took on local authors of southwest and literary fiction, including Michael H. Thomas, Ben Tarver, David L. Condit, Tim MacCurdy and Michelle Miller Allen. Adela gained notoriety in her own right with her recipe books, New Mexico *cuentos*, and a 17-year stint as the author of the "Southwest Flavor" column in NEW MEXICO MAGAZINE. After meeting Eva and Manfred Krutein through a cultural exchange program, Harry and Adela published four titles by the brilliant emigres from war-torn Europe. They published the fiction works of acclaimed literary scholar Gene H. Bell-Villada, and "the world's first anti-smoking novel" by Arthur L. Hoffman. Harry's opposition to radioactive dumping in New Mexico led him to publish the anti-nuclear manifesto of physicist Charles L. Hyder, to support Dr. Hyder in his fast against the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) in Carlsbad, NM, and to personally provide testimony to the DOE in opposition to the plant.

In 1989 Harry took author-artist Zelda Leah Gatuskin under his wing and launched her literary career with the publication of her novel THE TIME DANCER; several more of her own books followed, and Zelda also helped with other projects. In 2006 Zelda joined Harry and Adela as co-owner and managing editor of the press; she has now become sole owner of the press and succeeds Harry as Editor-in-Chief. Zelda is committed to perpetuating the mission Harry and Adela set forth for their publishing company and to preserve Amador Publishers as an independent, humanist press. Along with adding new authors, she will continue to publish the works of Harry Willson, for he left behind an extensive collection of unpublished essays and fiction.

The Amador Publishers family of authors, artists and associates will miss Harry's loving, courageous leadership. We extend our deepest sympathies to Adela and all members of the Willson and Amador families, and to all of Harry's dear friends from the Humanist Society of New Mexico, of which he was a devoted member. Harry's family requests that all tributes be made in the form of donations to that organization:

HSNM, P.O. Box 13675, Albuquerque, NM 87192

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www.humanistsocietyofnm.org

In addition to a family remembrance to take place Sunday March 21, 2010, Amador Publishers, LLC will host a community "Book Bash" at a later date to honor Harry's life and work, details to be announced.

More information about Harry Willson's books and the complete line of Amador Publishers titles is available at the website: www.amadorbooks.com