

south Texas border during a diplomatically delicate phase of the Mexican Revolution. "I remember those boys coming through Sinton on the train," recalled Miss Benson. "All of us young girls went down to the tracks and waived at them." Anything more? "Well, we talked to some of them too," she chuckled. Professor Benson could take a kidding.

One of my last contacts with Miss Benson occurred a couple of years ago at her home in Austin. She said that she was still working hard (and U-Texas Press subsequently published her new book), but that she felt weak all the time and could not hear very well anymore. She lamented that her loss of hearing had recently caused her to leave teaching. Truth is, the loss was ours'. Then I started to chat with her about my new project, how enthused I was about it and what I intended to write about it. "You can't say that," she bellowed with all of that wonderful, old Nettie Lee Benson fire, and she proceeded to tell me why, all based on sound historical evidence. I was thunderstruck—and thoroughly satisfied. What a mentor, what a friend.

Oh, Nettie Lee, Professor Benson. How we students appreciate you. We love you, miss you, remember and honor you.

#### NETTIE LEE BENSON—ROLE MODEL

I suspect Miss Benson would have objected to the title of this brief acknowledgment; she was a member of "the old school" and viewed people as individuals, rather than representatives of something larger. It was part of her charm that Miss Benson was always completely herself. You knew she had a solid sense of the good and the true, and sometimes she scared the living daylights out of you. Hers was a presence to be reckoned with, a good opinion to be won strictly on your merits as a scholar.

How refreshing she was! Unapologetically enamored of a country reputed to be *más macho que todo*, standing shoulder to shoulder with the *machos* on our side of the border, she won their grudging respect. To younger women, hers was a career to be admired at a time when so few bright females rose above secretary or grade school teacher. True, she didn't "have it all," but she never expected to.

Miss Benson gave us more than that. She showed female scholars throughout the United States who came in contact with her, that they could study Mexican history in a way different from that boasted of by their male professors. She spoke of the importance of sharing ideas with Mexican scholars, not of nights at male-only cantinas. She was a trail blazer at a time when some Mexican scholars and archivists thought women from the United States came to their country "for only one thing." She continued her study of political and legal institutions even during the decades when her male counterparts contended they didn't matter. (Miss Benson having the last laugh on that one.) Even her distinctive way of pronouncing Spanish, much

commented on then and now, showed us that others would listen if we, like she, had something important to say.

She is sorely missed already.

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#### WARREN DEAN

Warren Dean died on May twenty-first, in Santiago, Chile. The senseless and infuriating cause of his sudden death—a defective gas line in a rented apartment—deprived us of a remarkable colleague whose personal integrity and tireless intellectual curiosity greatly enriched the entire field of Latin American history. Warren is survived by his wife Elizabeth, his daughter and son, Julia and Thomas, and by his mother, Gabrielle Bach.

After graduating from the University of Miami in 1953, Warren tried out a variety of occupations, including (I learned to my genuine amazement) a job as a buyer at Bloomingdale's. His involvement in progressive politics and predilection for Caribbean culture eventually led to graduate work in Latin American history at the University of Florida-Gainesville. Warren's return to academia coincided with the early years of the Cuban Revolution, which he witnessed close-up during a brief stint at the University of Havana. This led to a master's thesis on Cuba during the Great Depression, but the increasing difficulty of travel to Cuba from the United States compelled Warren to consider another venue for his doctoral thesis. The intense pace of political and economic change in Brazil, and the widespread impression that a "pre-revolutionary" moment was developing there, moved Warren to focus on Brazilian history.

Warren was already an established and eminent figure in the field of Latin American studies when I entered graduate school in the early 1970s. Moreover, his reputation reflected not only his impressive scholarly accomplishments, but also his personal courage and commitments. At the time members of my cohort, many of us "graduates" of the antiwar movement, spoke in unusually respectful tones about Warren's experience as an assistant professor at the University of Texas. Legend—which in this case turned out to be true—had it that Warren ejected an army captain, a "green beret" in transit from Southeast Asia to Colombia, from his course on Latin American history. This was an especially strong symbolic act at the height of the Vietnam War and during a period of repressive military rule in Brazil. The resulting furor apparently contributed to Warren's decision to leave Austin and join the history department at New York University in 1970.