

The Janine Dakyns and Michael Parkinson Memorial Prize

Janine Dakyns (1939-1994) and Michael Parkinson (1945-1994) were both lecturers in French at UEA in the School of Modern Languages and European Studies (a forerunner of the current School of Language and Communication Studies) from 1969 until 1994, when both died within a few months of each other.

Janine Dakyns read French and Spanish at Oxford. She taught and researched at University College London and at Glasgow before joining UEA. Here she taught French literature, language and translation to great effect. Her abiding passion was Flaubert, and her enthusiasm was passed on to generations of students, for whom she was a constant source of vitality, encouragement and reassurance until her death in August 1994.

Michael Parkinson read French and German at Oxford before joining UEA in 1969. From 1978 he lectured at the University of Benin, Nigeria before returning to UEA in 1980. His research interest in the Swiss author C.F. Ramuz was a particular distinction and until his sudden death in April 1994 students and colleagues alike benefited from his skills as a teacher and scholar. His commitment, ability and humour are remembered with respect and affection.

Writer Max Sebald was a colleague of Janine and Michael in the School, and paid tribute to them in his book *The Rings of Saturn*:

“Michael Parkinson ...was in his late forties, a bachelor, and, I believe, one of the most innocent people I have ever met. Nothing was ever further from his thoughts than self-interest; nothing troubled him quite so much as the dire responsibility of performing his duties...I marvelled at the degree of dedication he always brought to his work...”

“Janine Dakyns ... like Michael, was a lecturer in Romance languages... [who] had, like Michael, studied at Oxford and over the years had come to a profound understanding of the nineteenth-century French novel that had about it a certain private quality, wholly free of intellectual vanity...”

W.G.Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. Michael Hulse. (1998)

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