



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

Kenneth Louis Schmitz, 1922–2017

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy

Trinity College

University of Toronto

Kenneth Louis Schmitz, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Toronto, and Fellow Emeritus of Trinity College, was born in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, on September 16, 1922 and died peacefully on August 25, 2017.

After graduating from high school in the town of his birth, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a navigator and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in World War II. After the war, he earned a B.A. in Philosophy and English at the University of Saskatchewan, followed by an M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Toronto.

He taught at Loyola University of Los Angeles, Marquette University, Indiana University, and the Catholic University of America. At Loyola, he was chair of the Philosophy Department for three years.

In 1971, he joined what was then the Department of Ethics at Trinity College in the University of Toronto. He was also a member of the University's Department of Philosophy, and was cross-appointed to the Centre for the Graduate Study of Religion.

An eminent and prolific scholar with particular expertise in the work of the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, he served as president of the Hegel Society of America, the Metaphysical Society of America, and the American Catholic Philosophical Association. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Council for Philosophical Studies for four years, and for three years he was a consultant to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

In 1974, he was the Thomas More Lecturer at Yale University, and in 1977 he was Visiting Professor to inaugurate the Chair in Christian Philosophy at Villanova University in Philadelphia.

He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters (honoris causa) by Benedictine College, Kansas, in 1983. In 1991, he was elected a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, and in 1992 he was awarded the Aquinas Medal by the American Catholic Philosophical Association.

At Trinity College, he participated with three colleagues in the teaching of a first-year course called Philosophical Classics. His erudition, clarity of thought, and personal warmth made him a highly effective teacher. He had a strong commitment to the College and was an active member of the Senior Common Room. A modest, dignified, and principled man, he treated colleagues and students with unflinching courtesy and respect. He remained a Fellow of Trinity until his retirement in 1988.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Council express its gratitude for the life of Kenneth Schmitz and his service to Trinity College and the Department of Philosophy, and that this Resolution be inscribed in the Minutes and a copy sent to his family with the Council's sympathy.