

**CLOSS, FREDERIC T., 1929-1985  
PAPERS, 1958-1985**

**SKILLMAN LIBRARY  
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Frederic T. Closs, an Associate Professor of English at Lafayette College and a Lafayette College alumnus, was born in Orange, NJ, on January 31, 1929, the son of Ruth Mary Callahan Closs (1894-1984) and Elton Hector Closs (1884-1961; Lafayette '05), who married in 1924. Closs had a brother, Elton H. '50 (1926-70). The family lived in Maplewood, NJ.

After graduating from Columbia High School in Maplewood in 1947, Closs, following the lead of his father and brother, enrolled at Lafayette College, graduating cum laude in 1951. At Lafayette, he was managing editor, then editor-in-chief of the *Lafayette* and a member of the English Literary Society. He served as president of the local chapter of Kappa Delta Rho, president of Kappa Phi Kappa (education), and vice-president of Pi Delta Epsilon. He was a member of KRT and Alpha Kappa Alpha (philosophy) and he continued his service after graduation as president of the chapter alumni board of governors and director of the national for eight years. Upon graduation, he was awarded the William W. Eddy Memorial Scholarship. In 1952, he was awarded an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and in 1964 a Ph.D. From 1952 to 1954, he served in the U.S. Army as a special agent in military intelligence. From 1955 to 1953, he served as assistant to the director of admissions at Lafayette. In spring 1958, he taught an evening section of Freshman English at Lafayette, and in 1960 he joined the Faculty of Paterson State College, where he taught until 1964. In 1964, he was hired by Lafayette as an Assistant Professor, and in 1970 he was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. Closs taught writing and literature courses, including Satire, Modern British Fiction, Twentieth-Century Poetry, and an American Civilization course, *The Black Man in America*. A poet himself, Closs led the College's Writer's Workshop from 1974 to 1985; hosted the Roethke Poetry Festival for 15 years, beginning in 1976; and presided over the MacKnight Black Poetry Prize. In 1984, he established the Mary Callahan Closs Residency in honor of his mother, who was also a poet. He was a member of the Modern Language Association and the American Folklore Society.

Closs's first wife was Loretta Intenzo Closs (1934-1974); following her death, he married Ellen Hurwitz, who was on Lafayette's History Department faculty and later became President of Albright College. His wife at the time of his death was Joan Grant Haines. Joan died of Parkinson's disease on September 6, 2005, at the age of 65. Closs had two children: Lawrence E. and Susan Mary and two step-sons, Mark Haines and Bruce Haines.

Following a heart attack on March 30, 1985, FTC took a medical leave. He died on April 30, 1985, at the age of 56. A memorial service was held in Colton Chapel on May 2.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Closs papers (1958-85), in two boxes, document FTC's years on the Faculty at Lafayette College (1964-85 +one course in 1958) with folders in Box 1 on his teaching, his scholarship, and his service. There is also a folder on his earlier career at Paterson State College (1958-64). Box 2 holds folders on FTC's poetry initiatives: Writer's Workshop (1974-86), the Roethke

Poetry Festival (1976-85), and the MacKnight Black Poetry Contest (begun in 1979). There are also miscellaneous poetry and personal folders. Included at the end of this Finding Aid is a list of poets featured at each of the Roethke Poetry Festivals.

The Closs Papers were acquired by former College Archivist, Albert Gendebien, after Closs' death in 1985.

## **INVENTORY**

### **Box 1**

#### Teaching

- 1 English 1, Ideas and Expression, Spring 1958 (prior to his hiring as a fulltime Faculty member in 1964)
- 2 English 1: Syllabi and Exams, 1964-84
- 3 English 1: Course Materials
- 4 English 1: Anthology of Student Papers, 1978
- 5 English 2, Satire: Syllabi and Exams, 1963-84
- 6 English 2: Course Materials
- 7 English 2: Student Papers
- 8 English 2, Fiction: Student Papers, 1984
- 9 English 4: Course Materials
- 10 English 5, The Literary Tradition/Literary Form and Meaning: Syllabi and Exams, 1964-84
- 11 English 5, Course Materials
- 12 English 5, Student Papers
- 13 English 6, The Literary Tradition/Literary Form and Meaning: Syllabi and Exams, 1965-83
- 14 English 6: Reserve Readings
- 15 English 6: Course Materials
- 16 English 6: Student Papers
- 17 English 9, Advanced Writing
- 18 English 9: Course Materials
- 19 English 9: Student Papers
- 20 English 10, Advanced Writing: Student Papers 1982
- 21 English 20, Satire and the Absurd, 1984
- 22 English 34, Modern British Fiction: Syllabi and Exams, 1967-77
- 23 English 34: Course Materials
- 24 English 34: Student Papers, 1967
- 25 English 35, Twentieth-Century Poetry: Syllabi and Exams, 1970-84
- 26 English 35: Course Materials
- 27 English 35: Student Papers, 1977, 1980, 1982
- 28 English 50, Hemingway/Faulkner: Student Discussion Notes, Course Materials, 1979
- 29 English 65-66, Junior Seminar, 1968-69, 1971-72, 1975-76
- 30 English 67-68, Honors
- 31 English 67-68, Student Papers, 1971
- 32 English 70, Satire, 1973-74
- 33 English 70: Student Papers

- 34 American Civilization 67, *The Black Man in America: Discussion Notes*, 1969, 1970
- 35 Independent Study: Student Papers, 1981
- 36 Modern American Song: Proposed 1983 (not taught)
- 37 Book Orders
- 38 Miscellaneous Course Materials
- 39 English/Education Major, 1970-84
- 40 Paterson State College, 1958-64

#### Scholarship

- 41 *Selected Poems of MacKnight Black*, 1971
- 42 Miscellaneous Scholarship, including review of Jay Parini, *Theodore Roethke*
- 43 Semiotics Discussion Group, 1979
- 44 Mellon Grant, 1979

#### Service

- 45 Miscellaneous Service

### **Box 2**

#### Writer's Workshop

- 1 1974
  - 2 Student Writing, 1974
  - 3 1975
  - 4 Student Writing, 1975
  - 5 1976
  - 6 Student Writing, 1976
  - 7 1977
  - 8 Student Writing, 1977
  - 9 1978
  - 10 Student Writing, 1978
  - 11 1980
  - 12 Student Writing, 1980
  - 13 1981
  - 14 Student Writing, 1981
  - 15 1982
  - 16 Student Writing, 1982
  - 17 1983
  - 18 Student Writing, 1983
  - 19 1984
  - 20 Student Writing, 1984
  - 21 1985
  - 22 Student Writing, 1985
  - 23 Undated Student Writing (some may be from courses)
  - 24 Undated Student Writing (some may be from courses)
  - 25 Undated Student Writing (some may be from courses)
  - 26 Undated Student Writing (some may be from courses)
  - 27 Mailing Lists, Miscellaneous
- Roethke Poetry Festival\*

- 28 1976
- 29 Correspondence, 1976
- 30 Budget, 1976
- 31 1977
- 32 Anthology, 1977
- 33 1978
- 34 1979
- 35 1980
- 36 1981
- 37 Student Writing, 1981
- 38 1982
- 39 1983
- 40 1984
- 41 1985
- 42 1986 (after FTC's death)
- 43 Agents for Visiting Poets
- 44 Gerald Stern, Visiting Poet, Spring 1975; Workshop Appearance, 1976; Readings, 1980 (including cassettes) and 1983; Roethke Poetry Festival, 1977, 1978, 1982
- MacKnight Black Poetry Contest
  - 45 General
  - 46 Student Writing, 1979
- Miscellaneous
  - 47 Easton PTA Literature Competition, 1981, 1983
  - 48 Poetry Workshop of the Lehigh Valley (*Menage à Six*), 1975
  - 49 Miscellaneous Poetry Workshops
  - 50 Poetry Catalogues, Journals
  - 51 Friends' Poetry
  - 52 Poetry and Technology
  - 53 Drug Abuse
  - 54 Personal Correspondence

\*Featured Poets, Roethke Poetry Festival:

- 1976 David Ignatow, Philip Dow, C. K. Williams, Muriel Rukeyser
- 1977 Sandra McPherson, Thomas Lux, Gerald Stern, Sonia Sanchez
- 1978 Heather McHugh, Helen Chasin, Alan Dugan, Etheridge Knight
- 1979 Ai, Allen Ginsburg, Stanley Kunitz, Linda Pastan
- 1980 Jay Parini, Anne Stevenson, Mark Strand, Louise Gluck
- 1981 Derek Walcott, Philip Levine, Stephen Spender, May Swenson
- 1982 Linda Gregg, W. S. Merwin, Galway Kinnell, Tess Gallagher
- 1983 Stephen Dunn, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ellen Bryant Voigt, Louis Simpson, C. K. Williams
- 1984 Donald Hall, Stephen Dobyns, Sandra Maria Esteves, Sharon Olds, Etheridge Knight
- 1985 Michael Harper, Heyden Carruth, Maxine Kumin, Roseanne Warren