

GENEROUS TYPE

Paul Hayden Duensing

IN OR AROUND the summer of 1981 I had been thinking about the possibility of cutting a type design in metal. I had heard of a legendary figure living in Kalamazoo, MI, who had been doing this very thing for more than 20 years. Since I was not certain if there really was a Kalamazoo outside of the song, I was not convinced there was an individual cutting type outside of the existing companies that had the knowledge at that time.

A few phone calls here and there gave me his address. It was in Kalamazoo. I wrote him a short letter asking if he could give me a starting point in cutting type and producing matrices. In a very short time there came a letter and a package of information divulging methods, materials and where things were to be obtained.

Before too long the phone rang. It was Paul Hayden Duensing, calling long distance on his dime! We spoke for nearly an hour. I came off the phone with my head spinning at his knowledge and generosity.

Over the next 25 years this was what I came to expect from this great man: sharing, generous, encouraging and praising. He was always willing to pass on what he knew, and gave of himself to whomever asked.

Paul's background was in graphic design and book design. Through this field he somehow became involved with Upjohn Pharmaceuticals as exhibit designer and later, and for many years, as exhibit coordinator. This position made it necessary for him to travel the world, and in so doing he found time to visit all the major type foundries and typesetting machine companies of Europe and South America. This experience broadened his knowledge greatly.

He made fast and lasting friends everywhere he travelled.

Over his long career, he designed and cut a great many suites of matrices, some done alone in his workshop and some done with his friend of decades, Andrew Dunker, who was a professional machinist with a great knowledge of things mechanical and metallurgical. His type work was completely avocational, done for the love of the craft.

Paul was one of the early members of the American Typesetting Fellowship, instituted by Rich Hopkins of Terra Alta, WV. In an act typical of both men, they offered free classes in the arcane craft of type cutting and casting. Paul's tongue-in-cheek suggestion for the "school" was Monotype University. Rich cringed a little at the apparent pomp of the name, but Paul persevered, and it stuck. Coming from any other men, Monotype U might have been thought of as pretentious, but in the hands of the "faculty" the school became a popular hands-on seat of learning.

A few years ago Paul was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Little by little over the years he lost ground physically. His mind, however, remained sharp, and his interest in type, keen. A little over two years ago I attended the Terra Alta, WV, conference of the ATF. Paul was present, and the conference, without it being planned, became a tribute to him. All the members knew that this was possibly the last time we would see Paul.

On November 10, 2006, Paul Hayden Duensing lost his fight with illness. He is missed here at Pie Tree Press in New Westminster, and every place where type and the making of it consumes people. I can speak for many in saying that if there was no him, there would be no us.

Jim Rimmer

ALCUIN PRINTS!

STARTING WITH THE next issue (June 2007), *Amphora* will begin issuing a series of original wood-engraving prints by contemporary professional and amateur Canadian artists. Each of the next four issues will include a tipped-in original print, along with a brief biography of the artist. The artists are, in order of appearance: Jim Westergard, Shinsuke Minegishi, Michael Kluckner and Gary Sim. All were given the same general concept to explore—create a device for an imaginary press.

The project was conceived and orchestrated by member Ralph Stanton, Rare Books and Special Collections librarian at the University of British Columbia Library. "When I was preparing the move of Rare Books and Special Collections from the old Main Library in the summer of 2005, a

decision was made to transfer a number of fine arts journals over to us. Some of these had original prints tipped in. At the same time the Alcuin Society Publications Committee was discussing what artists should be featured in future issues of *Amphora*. It was not much of a step to think of adding original art to *Amphora*. Around then I happened upon a book on printers' marks in the Rare Books stacks, so the theme of imaginary printers' marks popped into my head."

Long-time Alcuin patron Dr. Yosef Wosk donated funds to pay the artists an honorarium, and a British Columbia bookseller offered to cover the cost of having the blocks printed by renowned wood-engraving printer Jan Elsted of Barbarian Press.