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## MEMORIES ABOUT PAUL TOEWS

**The well-known American historian Peter Klassen shares his thoughts about scholarly, teaching and cultural activity of Prof. Paul Toews.**

*Keywords:* Prof. Paul Toews, Mennonite History, Chortytza-99, Fresno Pacific University (USA).

**Наведено спогади відомого американського історика П. Классена про наукову, культурну та викладацьку діяльність професора Пола Тевса.**

*Ключові слова:* професор Пол Тевс, історія менонітів, Хортиця-99, Університет Фресно Пасифік (США).

**Приведены воспоминания известного американского историка П. Классена о научной, культурной и преподавательской деятельности профессора Пола Тевса.**

*Ключевые слова:* профессор Пол Тевс, история меннонитов, Хортиця-99, Университет Фресно Пасифик (США).

**Publiziert werden Erinnerungen des bekannten amerikanischen Historikers P. Klassen über Professor Paul Thoews' Tätigkeit auf wissenschaftlichem und kulturellem Gebiet sowie in der Hochschullehre.**

*Schlagwörter:* Prof. Paul Thoews, Geschichte der Mennoniten, Chortytza-99, Fresno Pacific University (USA).

Paul was one of my closest friends, both personally and professionally. I was saddened to learn of his passing, but was honored and enriched to have had him in my life these past fifty years.

I greatly appreciated that Paul was committed to preserving our Mennonite heritage. His commitment to creating the next generation's interest in and appreciation of Mennonite teachings and ways is one of the main reasons that FPU has been able to maintain ties to our historic roots. I was struck by how he could challenge students to more deeply explore Mennonite issues in a way which left the students interested in further work and research. He cherished his heritage and culture and was courageously willing to present all sides of it to his students and his colleagues. He asked questions of his students and chattered with them in class, rather than «lecturing» He talked about history and sought out his students' thoughts

about the same. He valued ideas and was not tied to a particular opinion. Mostly, he invited independent and critical thinking by everyone.

Paul and I worked together on many projects, mostly in the area of Anabaptist/Mennonite history. When it came to historical projects, he invariably demanded historical precision and was not satisfied with sweeping generalities. He valued truth. He stimulated academically important debate through thoughtful and even provocative statements. I valued and appreciated that Paul would vigorously, but respectfully defend positions where I disagreed with him.

As an engaged and knowledgeable student and professor of Mennonite history, Paul had few peers. And while he was impressive as a scholar, Paul's greatest gifts in my view were as a trusted friend and gentleman. He was thoughtful in his expression of ideas and demonstrated a genuine concern for others, pressing them to be willing to aggressively seek the truth, irrespective of where their search might lead.

With Paul, scholarship and growth was not limited to events which occurred hundreds of years ago. He made his work practical with an infectious enthusiasm and thoughtfulness which motivated students and colleagues alike to challenge themselves intellectually and academically.

I always enjoyed exploring, studying, and teaching Anabaptist history. I enjoyed this exploration so much more because Paul was my friend and colleague. I greatly miss him.

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## **MEMORIES ABOUT A HISTORIAN AND A COLLEAGUE**

**The author tells about life and scholarly activity of American Prof. Paul Toews.**

*Keywords:* Paul Toews, Mennonite History, Chortytza-99, Fresno Pacific University (USA).