

THE SANTA BARBARA INDEPENDENT

Obituary | Tue Sep 24, 2024 | 9:24 am

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Dr. Harvey Leo Sharrer

Date of Birth

May 26, 1940

Date of Death

September 12, 2024

Dr. Harvey L. Sharrer, Professor Emeritus at the University of California Santa Barbara, passed away at his home in Santa Barbara on Thursday, September 12, 2024. Dr. Sharrer's life was dedicated to education, academic research, and world exploration.

Born in Oakland, California in 1940 to Ruth Morehouse and Harvey Sharrer, he spent his formative years in Oakland and Danville, California, graduating from San Ramon Valley Union High in 1958. His passion for foreign languages was ignited by his high school Spanish teacher, who inspired him to pursue language studies in college. After high school, Harvey took a summer course at the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies and attended the Fall quarter at the University of San Francisco. He then took a hiatus to work with his father's remodeling business, saving money for a transformative month-long European trip with a high school friend—an experience that kindled his lifelong love for world travel.

Returning to the U.S., Harvey earned his BA and MA in Spanish from UC Berkeley in 1963 and 65, respectively, followed by a Ph.D. in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literature from UCLA in 1970. His academic career at UC Santa Barbara began in 1968 as an Acting Assistant Professor, becoming a full Assistant Professor in 1970.

Dr. Sharrer was universally admired for his scholarship and his impressive breadth of knowledge about the Middle Ages, encompassing Arthurian literature, Medieval lyric, and digital humanities—a field in which he was a pioneer. His expertise spanned Portuguese, Galician, Spanish, and Catalan literatures.

His magnum opus, *PhiloBiblon*, was a collaborative project creating a database of medieval Iberian Peninsula manuscripts. Harvey's most significant discovery was seven unknown lyric poems in Galician-Portuguese by King Dinis (14th century), found on a parchment now known as the *Pergaminho Sharrer* [Parchment Sharrer].

Retirement came in 2011, but it did little to slow Harvey down. He continued to participate in conferences worldwide and at UCSB, generously proofreading articles for his former department. He remained a respected and admired scholar, mentor, and colleague throughout his life.

Harvey Sharrer will be deeply missed for his extraordinary scholarship, his remarkable mentorship of students and young scholars, and his judicious, generous, and polite demeanor. His work will continue to influence future generations of scholars. In recognition of his prestigious scholarly career and lasting impact on the Santa Barbara campus, the campus flag will be lowered to half-staff on Wednesday, October 2.

Harvey, who never married and considered his career his life's work, is survived by a sister, Elizabeth Porter, in Upland, CA, and a brother, William Sharrer, in Louisville, KY, and several cousins, nieces, and nephews who will miss him dearly.

Harvey did not wish to have a formal memorial service to be remembered, but rather planned to create an endowment to be established in his name at UCSB called the "Harvey L. Sharrer Dissertation Travel Grants. This endowment will support future scholars in their research endeavors, particularly in the fields of Ibero-Romance languages, reflecting Dr. Sharrer's lifelong passion and areas of expertise.

