

In memoriam Michael Noonan

(14 September 1947, Auburn NY – 23 February 2009, Whitefish Bay WI)

Our colleague and friend Michael Noonan died suddenly at home on 23 February 2009.

Michael, known universally as “Mickey”, obtained his PhD from UCLA in 1981, and after a number of visiting positions he joined the regular faculty of the Department of English of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in 1986; since 1997 he was Full Professor in the department. He served both as department chair and as coordinator of the English Language and Linguistics Program.

Despite his heavy commitment to the Department of English – his *Course in English Grammar*, though still unpublished, has been used in classes for several years – Mickey also contributed to our understanding of a wide range of languages, from his early interest in Salishan, through his comprehensive grammar of the Nilotic language Lango (Berlin 1991), to work on the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal and on his heritage language Irish. Grammars of two Tibeto-Burman languages, Chantyal and Nar-Phu, were in progress at the time of his death; they were based on his NSF-funded fieldwork, which had already led to state-of-the-art surveys of each language in the volume *Sino-Tibetan Languages* (London 2003). His co-authored *Chantyal Dictionary and Texts* appeared in 1999 (Berlin), and he also co-produced the first ever book in the Chantyal language, a collection of children’s stories. His mentoring activities at UWM encompassed fieldwork by his graduate students.

Mickey worked on a number of grammatical topics from a functional-typological perspective. His contribution “Complementation” in the 3-volume *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (Cambridge 1985, rev. 2007) is a classic, though he also made important contributions to phenomena as diverse as voice, spatial reference, and reported speech. Despite his commitment to a functionalist approach to language, he recognized the importance of continuing dialog with formal linguistics, one of the fruits of this being the co-edited volumes *Functionalism/Formalism* (Amsterdam 1999), based on a conference that he co-organized.

Mickey was co-editor of the journals *Studies in Language* (Amsterdam) and *Himalayan Linguistics* (Santa Barbara) and of the book series: *Studies in Language Companion Series* (Amsterdam) and editor of the book series: *Typological Studies in Language* (Amsterdam).

Mickey’s colleagues and friends will also remember him for his encyclopedic mind, his intellectual honesty, his keen sense of humor – and for being a wonderful person.

Mickey’s wife Sally has asked those wishing to contribute to his memory to donate to the Endangered Language Fund (<http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org>), writing on their check “In memory of Michael Noonan”.

Bernard Comrie