

Editors' Note

The first 2011 issue of the Ostrava Journal of English Philology pays tribute to the late Professor Aleš Svoboda: a distinguished linguist, an excellent teacher, and a greatly missed colleague and friend. Aleš Svoboda left us in January 2010; this April he would have celebrated his 70th birthday.

This all-linguistic special issue of the Journal contains research articles as well as reminiscences by a number of Professor Svoboda's colleagues, students and friends.

Aleš Svoboda was associated with the Ostrava Department of English and American Studies from 1992, when the Department resumed its work after a twenty-year hiatus. Even though he was a full-time member of the Department only for a few short periods, he was always here at important times, and his contribution was always crucial. Two of his essential achievements should be highlighted: in 1992 he brought the Department into existence, and in 2008 he launched a programme of doctoral studies in English linguistics, with the first students enrolling in September that year. During the last four years of his incredibly active life, Aleš Svoboda was fully committed to the responsibilities of his position as the Head of the Ostrava English Department. The disease caught him in full swing – launching a project to prepare the collected works of his teacher Jan Firbas for publication, coordinating a Czech Science Foundation grant project involving a team of linguists from the Department, founding a linguistic research centre, organizing the first year of the Department's PhD studies, supervising a number of dissertations, and much more.

Aleš was and still is painfully missed. Not only as the driving force behind a number of projects – which have now been successfully completed and which continue to inspire the Department in its continuing research and teaching activities – but first and foremost as the mainstay of the Department, a knowledgeable, experienced and helpful source of support, somebody his colleagues and students could always rely on. Aleš was an exceptional personality. The respect he naturally enjoyed from his colleagues and students came not only from his expertise as a researcher and teacher, but also from his organizational skills, his energy and drive, his friendly and sociable manner. He was respected, and he respected others, creating an atmosphere in which a well-done task was always noticed

and appreciated, be it research, teaching or administration – an atmosphere which was thus highly motivating and inspirational.

Many of the achievements of the Department, as well as of Aleš's former students, bear the imprint of his knowledge and skills, and will continue to bear this imprint for many more years. Hopefully, he would have been happy to see the fruits of his work grow and prosper.

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