Frederic Gomes Cassidy
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If there is a single scholar who was to the twentieth century what James Murray was to the nineteenth, that person was Frederic Gomes Cassidy. Like Murray, he was voluminously knowledgeable, insatiably curious, and consumed with the need to do a job carefully and well. The jobs varied through the years, but always centered on some aspect of the English language: an Old English pronoun, a phrase from Chaucer, Africanisms in Jamaican Creole, place names in Wisconsin, or the whole panoply of American English dialects. Eventually, recording words, their significations, and examples of their use became his passion. And the last thirty-five years of his life — a time when he might have retired to a warm and sunny place of leisure — were devoted to the accomplishment of that goal in his monumental project, the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (familiarly known as DARE).

Cassidy's interest in varieties of English came naturally enough: he was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1907, to a Canadian father and a Jamaican mother. He grew up hearing their two varieties of standard British English and the Creole speech of the Black majority as well. (His fluency in the patois was so firmly ingrained that, on visiting Jamaica about seventy years later, he was able to frustrate an attempted robbery by scolding the attacker in Creole.) In adulthood Cassidy liked to joke that his interest in language resulted from osmosis: the words must have seeped into him from the dictionary when his father sat him on "the big Webster's" so that he could reach the dinner table.

Fred's father, Walter Clarence Cassidy, had gone to Jamaica from New Brunswick in 1900 after "failing" the physical examination

required for application to medical school. A tropical climate, he was told, was all that could save him from tuberculosis. So, with letters of introduction to local branches of Canadian banks, he set off for the West Indies to become a banker. Although financial institutions did not retain their interest for him — the burgeoning automobile business was much more exciting — the move to the tropics was a prudent one: he lived another 63 years.

On his mother's side, Fred descended from the Gomes-Casseres family in Kingston, a branch of the Portuguese Gomes family that had taken refuge from the Inquisition by dispersing to France, Holland, and, in the 17th century, to the New World. The marriage of Manuel Gomes and Isabel de Cáceres yielded nine children, one of whom settled in Curacao. He in turn had ten sons who became widely known as "the ten Gomes-Casseres brothers," whose business enterprises spread throughout the West Indies. One of those brothers, Fred's grandfather, settled in Jamaica.[1]

Although Fred's maternal grandparents had Spanish as their first language, his mother and her two sisters went to English schools, soon becoming anglicized in both language and customs. So the marriage of Camilla Gomes-Casseres of Kingston, Jamaica and Walter Cassidy of St. Johns, New Brunswick united cultivated speakers of Jamaican English and Canadian English, both of whom cared about their language and the ways their children should use it.

In the unpublished reminiscence of his childhood written late in his life, Fred Cassidy remembered his mother's reading to him and his brother Harold (a year his senior), and then teaching them to read for themselves, starting with nursery rhymes:

> It turned out that I had a "good ear," picked up tunes easily. Not only nursery rhymes but verses in general. I discovered that there was a kind of rightness in the sounds of words: they fell naturally into simple patterns . . . You only had to find words that sounded alike, fill in some others between and you had Poetry. A fascinating discovery . . . It opened up a new world of words in patterns of sound and meaning that one could recite or sing. [18]

[1]The details about Fred's family come from an unfinished and unpublished reminiscence, "A Childhood in Jamaica," collated by Claire Cassidy and Jennifer Cassidy-Gilbert from notes and tape recordings that Fred had made during the last few years of his life. Additional details and clarification were provided by Claire Cassidy.

That discovery would play an important part in Fred's life. Although he didn't publish a large number of his poems, writing them, whether they were carefully constructed sonnets or whimsical verses dashed off to commemorate an occasion, provided great pleasure for more than eighty years.

The poetry of scientific names also fascinated Fred from a very early age. He and Harold led very much an outdoor life in the lush landscape of Jamaica, investigating the guango tree with its sweetish, sticky juice, learning to avoid the cow itch with its spiked hairs that caused fierce and painful itching, breaking up nests of "wood ants" (termites), collecting bugs, insects, and lizards, and visiting the Hope Botanical Gardens. There, the plants all had individual labels: "These we would read, probably mispronouncing them, but names Latin and Greek nonetheless" [24–5]. Learning the scientific names for plants and animals, as well as the local common names, became a challenge and a source of pride throughout his life. Family members recalled at his memorial service that a walk with Fred through a garden would start with his appreciation of the color and form of a particular plant, move to an investigation of its fragrance and texture, elicit an explanation of the growth pattern as well as identification by genus and species, and trigger the recitation of a poem.

Though it was an idyllic landscape, Jamaica could not provide financial stability in the depressed economy that followed the first World War. So in 1918, Walter moved his family (then including twelve-year-old Harold, eleven-year-old Fred, and eight-year-old Camilla) to "the States" and took a job in the rubber industry in Akron, Ohio.

The northern industrial city could hardly have been more different from Jamaica, and the move was a difficult one, especially for Fred's mother. For Fred, one of the most striking realizations was that not only did people in Ohio sound different to him, his own speech sounded distinctly "funny" to them. There was an important benefit to that, however: a classmate was intrigued by the two boys from the exotic Caribbean who sounded like characters from the movies. Willard Van Orman ("Van") Quine, later to become one of America's most distinguished philosophers, befriended Harold and Fred, providing them entrée into the new community. Fred's friendship with Van was to last their lifetimes, nourished by shared experiences at Oberlin College, regular correspondence through the decades, and nearly annual hiking trips until they were in their late eighties.

While the Cassidy boys took to their new Ohio home fairly read-

ily, the adjustment was more challenging for their parents. Everything was different, from the chilly climate, to the coal-smudged skies, to the patterns of caste and class. Nor was the economy in the U.S. as bright as they had hoped. After about four years, when an anticipated promotion at the rubber company did not materialize, Walter and Camilla decided to return to Jamaica, taking their daughter with them but leaving Harold and Fred in Akron.[2] On their own, the young men rented a room, finished high school, and worked odd jobs to earn money for college. At first they took courses at the University of Akron, but both were ultimately able to transfer to Oberlin College.

It was at Oberlin that Fred truly thrived, earning a B.A. in 1930 and an M.A. in 1932.[3] The academic atmosphere was stimulating and the social life was supportive. Fred and Harold shared a house with Van Quine and several other young men, where the comradeship they developed substituted for the family life that had been missing. Looking back on his time at Oberlin, Fred always spoke with genuine gratitude for the opportunity to form such close personal bonds. And he was one of the college's most reliable alumni, returning for every reunion he could possibly fit into his schedule. (He had hoped to be able to attend his class's 70th reunion in the summer of 2000.)

Oberlin was also the place where Fred met the love of his life. A young Frenchwoman, Hélène Lucile Monod, had come to the United States from France to attend college in Greenville, Tennessee, had returned home to earn a diploma in French Literature from the Université de Paris, and had then come to Oberlin College, where she was serving as the *assistante* in the newly founded French House. Languages had always intrigued Fred, but here was a special reason to excel in French. Both Fred and Hélène went from Oberlin to the University of Michigan for graduate school, and they were married in Ann Arbor in December of 1931.

At Michigan, two lexicographical projects were under way: the *Middle English Dictionary* under Samuel Moore, and the *Early Modern English Dictionary* under Charles C. Fries. Fred was able to get a job with the latter, a stroke of luck for him since it was during the Depression, and an equally fortunate event for the world of lexicography since it introduced Fred to the process of making dictionaries. For the next

[2]Another daughter, Helen, was born after they returned to Jamaica.

[3]Although he finished the work for the Masters in 1931, the degree was not granted until 1932.

seven years, while he also taught undergraduates and earned his Ph.D. (1938), Fred worked with Professor Fries, Hereward T. Price (formerly of the *Oxford English Dictionary*), the medievalist Hope Emily Allen (famous for her discovery of the manuscript of *The Book of Margery Kempe*), and other graduate students compiling the raw materials for the dictionary.[4]

In a reminiscence of Miss Allen in *Dictionaries* (1989), Fred recalled the afternoon tea breaks that were enlivened by this vivacious scholar and her intense pursuit of matters etymological. Tracking down the origins of the phrase *to put a bug (or flea) in one's ear*, for instance, "led to the whole matter of familiar spirits, which in turn led to the word *fly*, another familiar spirit, and the senses of *bug* and *fly* as spies" (150). DARE staff members, reading Fred's short piece on Hope Emily Allen more than fifty years after the events he described, were brought up short: our morning coffee breaks, enlivened by Fred's intense curiosity about word origins, were the very reincarnation of those tea breaks in Ann Arbor.[5]

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[4]Fred's dissertation was titled "The Backgrounds in Old English of the Modern English Substitutes for the Dative-Object in the group Verb + Dative-Object + Accusative-Object." Some of the research was done during 1935–36, when Fred taught at the Université de Strasbourg, in France. Among the papers in his office at the time of his death was a letter to him from Otto Jespersen: Fred had written him with some grammatical questions, and the renowned philologist had graciously responded, answering the queries and regretting that he could not see Fred in Elsinore because he had not been well and had to avoid extra exertion.

[5]One of the first things every new DARE staff member learned was that coffee breaks were often the source of amazing new tidbits of information. That was particularly true when both Fred and John McGalliard (who joined the staff in 1976 after retiring from the University of Iowa) were present. The breadth of their knowledge regularly amazed those of us whose schooling had been much less comprehensive; together, they seemed to inspire one another to greater feats of recall, enjoying the friendly competition enormously. One day Fred was telling of his childhood move from Jamaica to Akron. He remembered discovering that a neighbor had a yard full of ripe strawberries. Although he had read about strawberries and cream in his British storybooks, he had never had a chance to taste the fruit, so he lay down on his belly with his face in the plants, picking and eating as fast as he could. "Wonderful," he recalled. This particular yard also had a patch of currant bushes. He knew currants from Jamaica as the dried fruits that went into a fruitcake, and he liked those. So he tried the fresh currants, too — what a horrible surprise! "*That* was a taste that took getting used to," he said. "And, by the way, do you know the etymology of *currant*? It's from *Corinth* — C-o-r-i-n-t-h, or with a *K*, of course, in Greek."

In the fall of 1939, with doctorates in hand, Fred and Hélène (and baby Frederic Jr.) moved to Wisconsin, where Fred had accepted a position as Instructor in the English Department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Even in 1939 the salary of $1,900 for the academic year was a meager one. But there were compensations: his colleagues included Merritt Hughes, Harry Hayden Clark, William Ellery Leonard, Henry Pochman, Ricardo Quintana, Helen C. White, Miles Hanley, Ruth Wallerstein, and Mark Eccles, a group in which he was proud to be included. And Fred was able to move steadily through the ranks of Assistant Professor (1942), Associate Professor (1947), and Full Professor (1950),[6] providing more comfortable financial support for his growing family.[7] He was required by law to retire in 1978, but the change was in name only: as Professor Emeritus he continued to come in to his office daily, taking time off only for meetings and an occasional pleasure trip.[8]

Cassidy's teaching covered a wide range of subjects over the years, including Old English, *Beowulf*, Middle English, Chaucer, History of the English Language, Introduction to English Literature, Phonetics, Linguistic Geography, and composition. He found time to write dozens of journal articles as well as to edit (with A.H. Marckwardt) the *Scribner Handbook of English* (2nd, 3rd, and 4th editions); to revise

[6]The death in 1946 of William Allan Neilson, editor in chief of the Second Edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, resulted in a protracted search for a successor. Fred was one of the candidates, and in 1950 he was offered the position. Showing the invitation to the English Department, he was able to elicit a counteroffer: promotion to Full Professor with a satisfying increase in salary. Those incentives, plus the knowledge that his family wanted to stay in Madison, were significant factors in his turning down the offer.

[7]Children Frederic Jr., Victor, Claire, and Michael were born in 1937, 1940, 1944, and 1946 respectively. One of Fred's regrets was that while he was able to rise through the ranks of the English Department, it was a much more difficult process for Hélène. Because she was a woman, a faculty spouse, and a mother, she encountered continuing resistance to being considered a serious scholar in the Department of French and Italian. She taught as an Instructor for many years before gaining a tenure track position.

[8]After Hélène's death in 1980, Fred focused even more intently on his work at *DARE*. He still enjoyed the annual hiking trip with Van Quine, took an occasional trip to Jamaica, and was a regular attender at meetings around the world; but in Madison, his days were spent at the *Dictionary* offices. (In 1986 he was married to Africanist Hazel Carter, but the relationship was to be very short-lived.)

Stuart Robertson's *Development of Modern English*; to write *The Place Names of Dane County*; and to revise (with Richard N. Ringler) *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader* (3rd edition).

Early in his tenure at the UW–Madison Fred also had a chance to do some fieldwork in Wisconsin for the Linguistic Atlas of the Great Lakes project, working with Albert Marckwardt, whom he had known at Michigan. Always interested in meeting new people, Fred found fieldwork a stimulating activity. And it also gave him the opportunity to become well acquainted with his new state, facilitating the work on his *Place Names of Dane County* (1947) and "Place Names of Brown County" (unpublished). In 1947 Fred enlisted the help of graduate student Audrey R. Duckert in setting up and carrying out the Wisconsin English Language Survey. This was a carefully designed vocabulary survey of residents of 50 communities in the state, a project that yielded both the basis for the DARE questionnaire and valuable experience in carrying out a major linguistics project. Their publication *A Method for Collecting Dialect* (1953) resulted from that collaboration. In it, they made clear their impatience that the dictionary envisioned by the American Dialect Society since its inception in 1889 had made very little progress, and outlined a method for moving forward on the project.

Fred's involvement with the English of America, however, had not diminished his interest in Jamaican English, and in 1951–52 he used a Fulbright Research Fellowship to return to the Caribbean to do fieldwork in the language of his childhood home. He established a base at the new University College of the West Indies (in Kingston) and set himself to reading all the relevant literature in the Institute of Jamaica. He then set out to canvas the island, interviewing 30 native Jamaicans, using a questionnaire based on those of the Linguistic Atlas projects but adapted to conditions in Jamaica. Traveling with a bulky, forty-pound tape recorder, a twenty-five-pound converter, and automobile batteries to run the equipment, he also made tape recordings of 40 people talking about their lives and their work: growing pineapples, cutting sugar cane, raising cattle, fishing, teaching school, or — Fred's favorite — making dugout canoes. These conversations provided the data for his book *Jamaica Talk* (1961); and the association with University College provided the opportunity to begin a longtime collaboration with Robert B. Le Page, who had begun research on his Linguistic Survey of the British Caribbean.

On a subsequent trip to Jamaica in 1955, a second Fulbright Fellowship in 1958–59, and visits in 1960 and 1961, Fred pooled resources not only with Le Page, but also with Beryl Loftman Bailey,

Louise McLoskey, and David DeCamp,[9] who were doing fieldwork for the Linguistic Survey of the West Indies.[10] With the oral data from the fieldwork, the written evidence from the historical texts, word lists submitted to a competition established by the Kingston *Daily Gleaner* (in which a prize was given to the writer of the best list of "dialect words and phrases"), and miscellaneous other sources, Cassidy and Le Page had the materials for a dictionary. Remembering the systematic methods and the careful procedures he had learned in Ann Arbor years before, and using the phonemic method he had developed for *Jamaica Talk*, Fred began compiling the *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (DJE). Published in 1967 (and revised in 1980), it was notable as the first serious lexicographical treatment of a Creole language and is now considered the standard work and a model for other Caribbean lexicons.

While the work on the DJE was moving forward, as he shuttled between Madison and Kingston, Fred was also becoming increasingly impatient that no one in the American Dialect Society had acted on the suggestions he and Audrey Duckert had made in 1953 regarding a dictionary of American English that would both complement and surpass Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898–1905). So in 1962 he read a paper titled "The ADS Dictionary — How Soon?" at the

[9]The relationship Fred developed with David DeCamp was typical of his interactions with other scholars, particularly younger ones, throughout his life: he gave them tremendous encouragement and moral support, guided them with concrete suggestions for improving their work, and sustained the relationship with genuine friendship. He was mentor to many. In an undated letter to Fred (probably written about 1970), DeCamp expressed it well: "Much as I appreciate the friendship which you and your family have for fifteen years extended to me and to my family, the help which you gave me when you were already the senior scholar but I was only the green young kid starting out, I am even more impressed by the helping hand which you now are extending to these new young people . . . who so badly need it now as I so badly needed it then. It would have been so easy a human frailty for you to be jealously resentful of all us johnny-come-lately's. I have been privileged to know a number of important linguists — Marckwardt, Atwood, Hill, Bloch, Joos, Trager, Haas, Cassidy — who have been kind to me and responsibly aware of their power in situations where a friendly smile can make a young man's career but a cold shoulder can break it. None of these, however, has so consistently and effectively combined all the qualities of scholar, gentleman, and friend as has Cassidy."

[10]This is the project title that Cassidy uses in the introductory matter to the *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, though in a recent letter to me Robert Le Page called it the Linguistic Survey of the British Caribbean.

society's annual meeting. As Miss Duckert remembered in the Fall 2000 issue of the *DSNA Newsletter*:

> His enthusiastic impatience got through to the group and when he had finished reading it, I stood up, was granted the floor by President Albert Marckwardt, and moved that Fred Cassidy be appointed to lay the plans for the society's official dictionary. That was that. The motion carried. (3)

The society's dictionary was to record the speech of Americans from coast to coast and from the smallest farming community to the largest metropolis, so the task was enormous. But with characteristic energy and optimism, Fred forged ahead. The fieldwork could be completed in five years, he thought, with the editing to take several more. With Duckert's help, the Questionnaire was put in final form;[11] Goldye Mohr, a recently retired librarian from the UW–Madison, was recruited to research the communities to be investigated and to create a bibliography of works to be read for citations; and James Hartman was brought to Madison to coordinate the fieldwork and the fieldworkers (80 by the end of the project).

In his address to the ADS, Fred had emphasized that adequate funding was the sine qua non for a project of this magnitude, but finding all of that funding himself was not a part of his vision. It would turn out to be the hardest part of the job. Things started well, however, with a grant from the federal Office of Education that covered much of the fieldwork.[12] By the end of 1970 the fieldwork was indeed com-

[11]When the Questionnaire had been printed and was sent to the Office of Education for final approval, there was consternation in Washington over question X31, "Other words around here for a woman's breasts." Not only was this Wisconsin researcher including an indelicate question, but he had also itemized in the Questionnaire some of the expected responses, to facilitate the fieldworker's recording job. First decreeing that the question had to be omitted, the bureaucrats finally agreed to Fred's blacking out the offensive answers in every copy of the Questionnaire. They remained blissfully unaware that any inquisitive person could hold the page to the light and read the suggested [and suggestive] responses through the slash of the black marking pen.

[12]Not yet wise to the ways of the bureaucracy, Fred assumed that money granted was money to be spent, so right away he purchased five Dodge vans and equipped them as "Word Wagons" for the full-time fieldworkers who would live in them. When administrators at the UW showed up to collect their indirect costs (based on a contract between the University and the federal government), they were too late. Recalling this incident with a grin in 1999, a former Graduate School official told me that the UW simply had to absorb the costs.

pleted. But the rest of the project was not as straightforward as anticipated. Not only had the quotation files grown enormously and the fieldworkers collected much more material than expected (about 2.5 million responses to the questions in the Questionnaire), but the computerization of the oral data and the historic materials turned out to be more complex than anyone had imagined.[13] And the editorial process, once started, evolved steadily, incorporating numerous levels of review and verification in an attempt to make this the most accurate description possible of the regional and folk speech of the United States.

A separate history of DARE may someday detail the building of a staff, the establishing of editorial and production processes, the organizational challenges, the financial worries, and the scholarly triumphs of the project. Suffice it to say here that the project caught the imagination of scholars and lay readers alike, and even before the first volume had been published, Fred had become a hero. William Safire emerged as a personal fan and a public booster, newspapers throughout the country delighted in the local color aspects of the project, and Fred and other DARE staffers kept the undertaking in the scholarly spotlight. Fred often remarked that he was uncomfortable with all the publicity because, when he was growing up, the only people whose names appeared in the paper were those accused of a crime. But he soon got used to the visibility, and by the time he was asked to appear on the *Tonight Show*, seemed genuinely to enjoy the limelight. He was DARE's most valuable asset, a charismatic promoter whose enthusiasm, charm, and determined optimism kept the project afloat during its growing pains and numerous financial crises.[14]

The publication of Volume I (introductory matter plus A-C) in 1985 by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press was heralded across the country, and the volume went through five printings within

[13]Fred understood from the start that computers would be essential to this dictionary, both in managing the data and preparing the text, but he did not realize how little experience computer programmers had had at that point in managing words rather than numbers. That learning experience was time consuming, as were many others along the way.

[14]Starting in 1970, the National Endowment for the Humanities began providing help for DARE, and that agency has been the most important source of support ever since. Major grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation were also crucial to survival, and grants from the National Science Foundation and gifts from private foundations and individuals have sustained the project.

the first year. Although the second and third volumes (D-H, 1991, and I-O, 1996) did not receive the same avalanche of publicity in the popular press that had greeted Volume I, the newspaper writeups were still enthusiastic and the scholarly reviews full of admiration. Fred was hailed as America's James Murray.

Like James Murray, Fred remained vitally active with his dictionary long after most people would have retired. Although he had started turning administrative responsibilities over to me on my appointment as Associate Editor in 1979 and had completed that transition by about 1990, he remained committed to reading every entry and to publicizing the project at every turn. In remarkably good health and amazingly spry in his late eighties, he continued to come to the office daily. Asked by countless newspaper reporters whether he expected to see the last volume come off the press, he always allowed, with a smile, that he knew that the odds were against him, but that he didn't know why he shouldn't.

No one else discounted his chances either, until the day before Thanksgiving in 1996. Crossing the street at dusk in a snow storm, he was hit by a careless driver. Two of the bones in his right leg were broken in four places, and he was consigned first to the hospital, and then for four months to a rehabilitation center. The accident took a large toll in terms of his strength; but Fred's resilience, physical and emotional, was inspirational.[15] First he determined that since he had to be restricted anyway, he might as well write a review he had been intending to do for months. Then he decided that although the occupational therapy exercises he was assigned seemed quite silly, he should probably do them just in case they might be of some help. Recovery was slow, but he graduated from a wheel chair to a walker to a cane and finally — triumph! He proudly announced that he no longer shuffled, but was back to a real stride.

[15]Even when he was propped up in bed with his leg in a sling, he took advantage of every "teachable moment." One day, shortly after Volume III was published and we had received cartons of copies, George Goebel and I took three boxes of books for him to autograph. We set up a production line in which I opened the book to the title page and set it on his bed tray, he signed it, and George closed it and packed it back in the box. We made quite a commotion, I guess, and lots of people peeked in to see what was going on. So Fred asked to keep a volume there with him, saying he would preen for anyone who came by. And then he said, "Did you know that *preen* is etymologically related to *prune*? Birds preen their feathers, and we prune our plants."

For the next three years, although he went to warmer climes during the worst of Wisconsin's winter, Fred continued to read galleys, work in his garden, go to concerts, take part in his play-reading group, go to movies, and enjoy good food. And until the last year or so, he continued to drive. The son of an automobile salesman, Fred had always liked to drive — and he liked to drive fast. (As DARE staff members can testify, it could sometimes be more than a little exciting to be in the passenger seat.) Being able to drive gave him full independence and freedom of choice. So when he finally had to give up his license, it was with real regret. It meant that he had to depend on others, which he didn't like to do. Most of the time his son Mike, his housemate Tom Herron, or one of us on the DARE staff could take him where he needed to go. But at one point he decided he ought to learn how to use the bus system. And I tell this story only to demonstrate the charisma that Fred Cassidy exhibited even in his 92nd year.

There is a bus stop not too far from his house, so one morning Fred walked there and waited for a bus. A car stopped and the driver asked if he wouldn't like a ride. Fine! Fred didn't recognize the man, but the driver knew full well who Fred was, and took him straight to Helen White Hall. The next time Fred went to the bus stop, a truck driver stopped, offered him a lift, and deposited him at our doorstep. The third time, Fred arrived just as a bus was pulling up. He got on, sat behind the driver, and engaged him in conversation. At some point the driver asked where he was going. "To Helen White Hall," said Fred. Without blinking, the bus driver went a good three blocks off his route and dropped him in front of Helen White Hall.

Everyone liked Fred Cassidy, from the bus driver to the hospital attendant to the professional colleague. He seemed to make friends instantly and effortlessly, and he liked to remember his friends. Coming back from trips, he would lay out an array of trinkets he had purchased so that all of us on the DARE staff could have a souvenir from the place he had visited; the weeks before Christmas were full of trips to specialty stores all around town because he needed to get the gift box off to France[16] and he had boxes and boxes to prepare for people in the U.S. as well. He even remembered the children of staff members, presenting them with unusual and intriguing gifts. Because he was involved in many professional organizations, he became friends with the members

[16]Fred continued to stay in close touch with Hélène's family in France after her death.

of each of them. Fred seemed to know everyone! And everyone wanted to know him.[17]

Fred's accomplishments have been recognized by the awarding of the Musgrave Silver Medal (1962), the Centenary Medal (1980), and the Musgrave Gold Medal (1984) by the Institute of Jamaica; by honorary degrees from Memorial University of Newfoundland, Indiana State University, the University of Michigan, Oberlin College, and the University of the West Indies; and by the Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Humanities Scholarship, given by the Wisconsin Humanities Council.

But public honors are a less important measure of Fred Cassidy's influence on the world of language scholarship than the testimony of colleagues and former students: these people unanimously remember a mentor whose strong support and gentle criticisms made them better scholars, whose genuine interest in others made every acquaintance a friend, whose intellectual curiosity was never at rest, and whose wit and love of play enlivened every gathering of which he was a part. His friends remember Fred's love of dancing, playreading, gardening, and good food, his delight in puns, limericks, and all kinds of wordplay, and, perhaps more than anything else, his eternal good cheer and unquenchable optimism. The feeling of many of his colleagues was summed up by one who said, "It was ridiculous to suppose that he could live forever, but I just assumed somehow that he would — or at least until the last volume was completed." His colleagues at DARE will complete the project in his honor, taking up his rallying cry, "On to Z!"

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[17]Over his career, Fred was an active member of the Society for Caribean Linguistics (which he helped to found), the American Dialect Society, the American Names Society, the Linguistic Society of America, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Council of Learned Societies, and, of course, the Dictionary Society of North America. He served as an officer of most of those organizations at least once.