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Untitled

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I was one of Ed's students. Ed was one of my mentors, and I am sad to have to be reflecting in such a way? about a good friend. First, my condolences to Maureen, Erica, Christopher, and other members of Ed's family.

I am one of the many foreign students who Ed Soja adopted. I would not have received my MA had Ed not taken me under his wing and pulled me through to completion. His love, care, and support are why I have that MA. For a boy who left school and home in England at 15 years of age, you will never know how important it was for me to get an MA. Not everyone in England automatically goes to Oxford or Cambridge. Through his tutoring and encouragement, Ed personally made sure I was awarded an MA. I suspect I speak for many others for whom Ed played a critical role in helping become the people we are.

Others today will speak of Dr. Soja's intellectual impact on various disciplines and so they should. He indeed was a giant. However, for many of us, especially those born in another country, Ed offered the largest gifts anyone can give another person: his home and the welcome of his family. On behalf of so many foreign students in particular, I wish to give my warmest thanks to his wonderful wife Maureen and his marvelous children Erica and Christopher. You are all so richly a part of who Ed was, and our memories of Ed always include memories of you. You were the International House of Soja.

I regret that this day has come earlier than it should, because you are the ones that will miss him the most. However, when I think of the times many of us students had with Ed and Maureen, I think of him as having Zorba like qualities, of the hospitality of him and Maureen, of the laughter, of the singing and the lust for life. Ed and Maureen gave us the best of times. Ed will not be forgotten by those who knew him. On behalf of the many foreign students

from around the globe who entered Ed's orbit, I thank him for who he is and what he gave and did for so many of us.

Allow me to close by quoting and paraphrasing from a poem by Dylan Thomas entitled:

"Do not go gentle into that good night"

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

And you, my father friend, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Ed gave us all so much light and love. What an honor to be able to speak so lovingly about an amazing human being who was also a good friend. Ed Soja. Thank you, thank you, thank you.