

R E M E M B R A N C E

Morris Eaves, 1944–2024

By Morton D. Paley

LIKE Morris's other friends, I find it hard to believe that his wonderful intelligence, energy, and humor are gone.

Like any other close partnership, co-editing involves problems in decision-making that must be worked out. A journal, however modest its beginnings, develops an ethos beyond the separate identities of its editors. One issue we had to address was whether our publication ought to have a particular view about the type of work we wanted to publish, or whether it should welcome all takes on Blake. By temperament, both of us wanted it to be open to all comers. We also agreed on especially encouraging junior scholars so that the editorial comments we sent would be helpful to them, and we wanted to keep a relatively low backlog so our authors would not regard their published work as dating from some past life.

Morris had some typical locutions. I can hear him now. "Paley, if you don't vote for Jimmy Carter, *our friendship is at an end*." Fortunately, I had already decided to vote for him. "Paley, *your best self* didn't write this letter." It hadn't. I wrote a new one.

A brilliant scholar and critic, Morris presented the new as if it were familiar and the familiar as if it were new. Who else would expound the epistemology and aesthetics of print-making with a projection of a dollar bill?

Morris and Georgia were wonderful cooks and intrepid explorers of restaurants, and they engaged their friends deeply in the Sublime of Food. They also led us to watch plays in theaters high and low. I remember watching one with them from the floor of a pub in London that was so far west it was literally off the map.

Morris knowingly gave free rein to his soft Louisiana accent, and his discourse was densely laced with language of a kind I hadn't heard since my schoolyard days in the Bronx. But I wasn't taken in. Did I somehow know that he was going to enrich my life for the next fifty-three years?