In memoriam Josef Raab (1960 - 2019)

The International Association of Inter-American Studies (IAS) and the Center for InterAmerican Studies (CIAS) at Bielefeld University share the sad duty to announce the passing of Josef Raab, the Founding President of the International Association of Inter-American Studies. Josef Raab passed away on the 9th of November at the hospital close to his house in Essen, after a long struggle with lung diseases that kept him in hospital intermittently.

Josef Raab was Full Professor of American Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, where he chaired American Literary and Media Studies since 2004. From 1999-2004 he was Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Bielefeld. Before, from 1993-2000, he was an Assistant Professor of American Studies, Catholic University of Eichstått and a Visiting Scholar at the University of Texas at Austin (1996-1997). After his undergraduate and graduate studies at the Catholic University of Eichstått (with studies abroad in Birmingham, London, Bordeaux, and Granada), he completed his post-graduate education at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, returning to the Catholic University of Eichstått for a post-doctoral degree in 2000.

His research interests included U.S. Latina/o Literature and Culture, Inter-American Relations, Ethnicity, Literature and the Arts, American Film and Television, having written also about several individual authors, such as Benjamin Franklin, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, Tony Kushner, August Wilson, and Toni Morrison.

His many academic achievements left a mark in the field he elected as his main research interest: inter-American relations. From his extended publications, aside from numerous articles in journals and book chapters, and just referring to the most recent books, we have the monograph: The Borderlands of Identity in Mexican American Literature (Katholische Universität Eichstått, 2000), and the volumes he edited or co-edited: Screening the Americas: Narration of Nation in Documentary Film / Narración de la nación en el cine documental (with Sebastian Thies and Daniela Noll-Opitz). Inter-American Studies | Estudios Interamericanos, vol. 1. Tempe: Bilingual Press & Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2011; Multiculturalism and Beyond: The New Dynamics of Identity Politics in the Americas (with Olaf Kaltmeier and Sebastian Thies). Special issue of Latin American and Caribbean Ethic Studies 7.2 (2012); Interculturalism in North America: Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Beyond (with Alexander Greiffenstern) Inter-American Studies | Estudios Interamericanos, vol. 8. Tempe: Bilingual Press & Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2013); New World Colors: Ethnicity, Belonging, and Difference in the Americas (Bilingual Press & Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2014); The New Dynamics of Identity Politics in the Americas: Multiculturalism and Beyond (with Olaf Kaltmeier and

From 2009 to 2018 he served as Founding President of the International Association of Inter-American Studies and advanced this international network with passion and vision.

We were very fortunate to enjoy his presence in our last IAS Conference in Coimbra in March 2018, even when he was forced to walk around with an oxygen tank, but without ever ceasing to show his kindness and good mood, the way he always managed to interact with colleagues and friends in spite of several and serious health problems. Unfortunately, we will no longer have him at our side at the next conference, in Laredo, but that will be our chance to honor him within the academic community he really praised and loved and in which he left his imprint both for his scholarship and his strong personality. In order to remember his great contribution to the establishment of Inter-American Studies in Germany and beyond we uploaded an interview conducted with Josef Raab last year. (https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/en/iias/)

Life did not always treat Josef gently, but his determination and strong enthusiasm kept him active and supportive all along. He left behind his wife Melissa and three kids. He will not only be remembered with fondness and gratitude by all who knew him personally, but referred to in admiration by our academic community. He will be missed by all of us.

On behalf of the IAS and the CIAS, we respectfully offer our sincere condolences to Josef's family for the passing of this charming and remarkable man.

Isabel Caldeira, Wilfried Raussert, Eleonora Rohland, Olaf Kaltmeier