

Jill Paton Walsh (1937 - 2020)

Jill Paton Walsh, born Gillian Bliss on April 29, 1937, was a British children's book author and novelist who added original volumes to Dorothy L. Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey mystery series. She died in Cambridge, England, on October 18, 2020, at the age of 83.

Jill was born in north London but spent several treasured years of her childhood in St. Ives with her grandparents, where she was sent during The Blitz. Memories from her years in St. Ives, as well as her Catholic upbringing, influenced her later writing. After completing her education at St. Michael's Convent in London, she read English literature at St. Anne's College, Oxford. There, she attended lectures given by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and was struck by the authors' commitment to both rigorous scholarship and the delight of fantasy.

Jill taught English at Enfield Grammar School but left after marrying Antony Paton Walsh in 1961 and having the couple's first child. Writing children's books entertained and fortified her as she struggled through the isolation and challenges of young motherhood. She wrote over twenty-three books for young readers but eventually turned her attention to writing for adults. Jill's ten adult novels include a four-book detective series featuring amateur sleuth Imogen Quoy and set at a fictional college in Cambridge.

Jill and her husband, with whom she had three children, were separated from 1986 until his death in 2003. In 2004, Jill married author and editor John Rowe Townsend. Together, they were a literary force that established Green Bay Press to publish Walsh's novel, *Knowledge of Angels*, when other publishing houses rejected it. The book went on to be short-listed for the 1994 Booker Prize. Townsend died in 2014, and in September 2020 Jill married Nicholas Herbert, the 3rd Baron Hemingford.

Among Jill's awards are the 1974 Whitbread children's book of the year for *The Emperor's Winding Sheet* and the 1976 Boston-Globe Horn book award for *Unleaving*. In 1996, she was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for services to literature.



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Jill Paton Walsh at Sayers Society event at Augustine House.

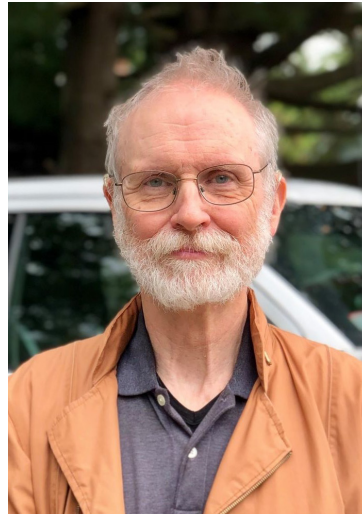
Photographer: Lesley Simpson.

The trustees of the Dorothy L. Sayers estate offered Jill the opportunity to complete Sayers's last Lord Peter Wimsey novel-in-progress, *Thrones, Dominations*, after the success of *Knowledge of Angels*. As part of her work on this book, Jill made a research visit to the Wade Center in April 1996 in order to consult a draft version of the novel in the Wade's manuscript collection. She went on to write three more mysteries featuring Lord Peter and Harriet Vane: *A Presumption of Death* (2002), *The Attenbury Emeralds* (2010), and *The Late Scholar* (2013). Jill was president of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society at the time of her death. In an October 2010 *Guardian* article she wrote, "Lord Peter ... is, in terms of sheer enjoyment, the best company who has ever lived in my inner world."

KENDRA LANGDON JUSKUS

Richard C. West (1944-2020)

Richard West, longtime Tolkien scholar and friend of the Wade Center, passed away from COVID-19 on November 29, 2020, in Madison, Wisconsin. Richard began the University of Wisconsin-Madison Tolkien Society while a student there in September 1966, and became part of the first wave of early Tolkien scholarship. He would remain an active Tolkien scholar the rest of his life, authoring *Tolkien Criticism: An Annotated Checklist* (1970), publishing and editing the Tolkien journal and fanzine *Orcrest* (1966-1977, 2017), becoming a founding member of The Madison Science Fiction Group and helping to found the feminist science fiction convention WisCon, as well as contributing articles and chapters to a wide variety of Tolkien and fantasy publications.



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Richard West in 2019.
Photographer: Carl F. Hostetter.

He served on the board of editors for *Extrapolations* and was the recipient of the 1976 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies. Richard was also an active member of the Madison C.S. Lewis Society. His interest