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Praxis, Poems, and Punchlines: Essays in Honor  
of Richard C. Richards

Philosophy

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## 00. Introduction

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## 00. Introduction

### Abstract

One of the most wonderful aspects of the job of university professor is that one's occupation is based on an area of personal expertise that shapes one's Being. So it is with Richard C. "Dick" Richards, who, amongst other areas of specialization, is a philosopher of love. Richard's Being is one deeply entrenched in love. There is, of course, the romantic love he long shared with his recently passed wife Marty, but there is also the love of many, many students and colleagues, both in and beyond the department at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, and undeniably his love for poetry, humor, and the philosophy to which he dedicated so many years. Most of all, though, is (as cliché as this sounds), his love of life. Few people so embody the virtues they discuss, living so vitally and thereby affecting the lives of so many who come in contact with them, even briefly, that this love is shared by so many. This volume is intended as a testament to that love given and now redirected back toward Richard C. Richards. [*excerpt*]

### Keywords

Richard C. "Dick" Richards, philosophy of love, California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, philosophy of humor

### Disciplines

Other Philosophy | Philosophy

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## Introduction

Steve Gimbel

One of the most wonderful aspects of the job of university professor is that one's occupation is based on an area of personal expertise that shapes one's Being. So it is with Richard C. "Dick" Richards, who, amongst other areas of specialization, is a philosopher of love. Richard's Being is one deeply entrenched in love. There is, of course, the romantic love he long shared with his recently passed wife Marty, but there is also the love of many, many students and colleagues, both in and beyond the department at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, and undeniably his love for poetry, humor, and the philosophy to which he dedicated so many years. Most of all, though, is (as cliché as this sounds), his love of life. Few people so embody the virtues they discuss, living so vitally and thereby affecting the lives of so many who come in contact with them, even briefly, that this love is shared by so many. This volume is intended as a testament to that love given and now redirected back toward Richard C. Richards.

On the title page of my personal copy of his book *A Philosopher Looks at the Sense of Humor*, is a personal inscription in which he deems me his "favorite Jew." This is a sentiment I accept with the

deepest honor. (I wish I could return it in the converse, but I would risk alienating my wife and while I love Richard...I don't love him THAT much). It is characteristic of his sense of humor: wry, sharp, and unexpectedly edgy while delivered with a calm sophistication. If one were to encounter a martini as dry as his sense of humor, it would leave one shaken, if not stirred to action trying to find how one could mirror his subtle, effective delivery. Richard contends that humor is the appreciation of incongruity and his humor perfectly embodies it. He is capable of delivering even the most crude remark in a sufficiently erudite manner that you are left at first wondering whether he really just said what your ears heard. Those who know him, know full well what he said, how he said it, and generally will need help getting off the floor as a result.

That scholarly, cultured way of being is not feigned for the sake of the joke. Dick is the quintessential philosophy professor: possessing a mastery of the history of human thought, committed fully to rigor in discourse, open-minded in his consideration of perspectives well-beyond the expected, and playful with ideas both new and old. He fully embodies the life of mind. In this way, he stands as a model to those of us who later embarked upon the path. He is the sort of authentic intellectual who reinforces your own love of ideas and wisdom because you can see without cynicism

that such authenticity is, in fact, possible. He stands as an instance of the final cause of the passion for thought that led so many of us to start thinking about these questions in the first place as naïve, excited teenagers. We then see someone well-removed from those early days, who has traveled the road for decades and has retained the love of that journey.

Richard loves philosophy and we love philosophy. For this reason, we also love him. That love is the reason for the following essays.