



## Meet Your Footnote: Loren Reid

by Joe Blaney

**Current  
Issue**

**Archives**

**Editorial  
Info**

**Search**

**Interact**

**Printer-friendly [PDF version](#)**

Bill and Pam Benoit's house in Columbia is perfectly suited for parties. Large open rooms spill into one another, leading to a screened-in porch. It's perfect for Missouri's Department of Communication back-to-school gathering. Heck, for us graduate students any place with hot water and a "no jiggle required" toilet handle was paradise. Maybe your program had an annual party like this. Returning graduate students would tell the greener ones about the departmental culture, which professors to hit up for independent studies in the various areas of interest, and so forth. There was also a fair amount of posturing going on...a pecking order being established, if you will. A lot of people were taking themselves very seriously. I'd just left the decidedly unserious world of music radio and didn't have much patience for these types. Nonetheless I was intimidated by the banter. It's a good thing that there was plenty of cheap domestic beer.

Among other luminaries, Loren Reid was in attendance. That really put me "on edge," because I knew his publications dated to the depression. I had been introduced to Emeritus Professor Reid the year before at a similar gathering at Mike Porter's house. I was too intimidated to converse. He was the world's most notable scholar on British public address...and I was...nervous. This time there was no avoiding him. He was the barrier between me and the pork 'n' beans.

What an engaging fellow! Uncomfortable small talk on my part immediately turned to his sustained interest in my pursuits. He gathered from Lauri's crucifix necklace that we were Catholics. Wanting to underscore our personal similarities, he told me that he and Gussie were Episcopalians. Similar indeed, we laughed! He was probably uptight about sex...and I was uptight about sex and feeling guilty about it!

During my three years in Columbia I would occasionally run into him when he checked on the mail or just stopped by to chat with the main office crew. He always asked about my progress in the program and what I was hoping for after completion. I was always struck by his humble nature, especially in light of what he contributed to the discipline.

[copyright](#) 2003, ACJ

Speaking of contributions, in the spring of 1998 Loren and Gussie decided to give “some journals” to the department. Not represented by a union, and lacking common sense, I volunteered to help bring them from the Reid residence to Switzler Hall. How many boxes could have been involved? Do the math: Ph.D., 1932; significant interest in scholarship prior to that; super-sized memberships in all associations, receiving all relevant journals; 1998-1932=66 years. A few boxes?

How shall I describe Loren and Gussie’s faces after Bill, Pam, and the unsuspecting grad students cleared out the garage and storage areas free of charge? The word “giddy” comes to mind!

Shortly after I took my first job at Northwest Missouri, I received an email from Loren offering his congratulations. He also reminisced about his youth, partially spent in good old Maryville. No wonder Loren Reid is such a gentleman. Maryville, Missouri produces that folksy stock.

But remembering his concern is rather humbling for me. Do I, as a working faculty member, engage in such surveillance of our recent grads from ISU? Perhaps short notes of encouragement to students I’ve never taught is something we should all should strive for.

God bless Loren Reid. And may he live to be 100!

[Back to Top](#)

[Home](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Archives](#) | [Editorial Information](#) | [Search](#) | [Interact](#)