



J. Martin O'Hara REMEMBERING J. MARTIN O'HARA and Friend community of the Thomas More Institute mourns deeply the loss on August 19, 2009 of Martin O'Hara, colleague and friend. Over a period exceeding a half century Martin was situated at the very heart of our institute as a Director, graduate, course designer, course leader, Academic Vice-President, beloved mentor. Martin's teaching was imbued with his love of Literature and Art, and had a deep and abiding effect on those who were taught by him or worked with him. His love of Art played out in his working with George Tutsch and the Thomas

More Associates from 1963 on, to mount the Annual Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary Quebec Artists which introduced so many Quebec artists to the community and won over so many in the community to attend every year, and as well extended their interest to visiting other art galleries in Canada and abroad. He quickly became a good friend of the Quebec artistic community especially for the quality of his eye and his introduction of newer, promising artists to the public. His most important contribution happened quietly, in the classroom as a school teacher; in his teaching of English and his instilling budding teachers at St. Joseph Teachers' College and later at McGill University, with an enthusiasm and confidence that would carry over to hundreds and thousands of pupils; and at a deeply personal level, around a table at the Thomas More Institute, where he led adults in courses ranging from The Age of Doubts and Questions - a study of the 17th century to Springs of Creativity - a study of creative sources in art and literature. As an early member of the Institute and serving on the Board of Directors of The Thomas More Institute from 1946 to 2003, Martin embodied, expressed and articulated the Thomas More Institute's educational commitments and ideals. In 1987 Martin edited Curiosity at the Center of One's Life. Statements and Questions of R. Eric O'Connor. Martin's introduction to this "flower of tremendous collective effort" and the qualities of Eric O'Connor he points to are a mirror of Martin's own beliefs and a key to his dedication to adult learning, among all his other avocations. He speaks of Eric O'Connor as one in love with learning and more and more asserting "a relationship between the personal development of individuals and the directions society could take," and highlights O'Connor's conviction that "persons making responsible decisions are persons exercising freedom," recognitions that highlight the vital importance of adult learning. Such beliefs are alive in Martin's participating in discussion groups with inmates at the Laval Correctional Penitentiary using imaginative readings in French and English, or guiding the Theatre Montreal course which annually offers an opportunity to attend and later discuss sixteen plays, eight in French and eight in English, or his leading the TV discussion course on CTV Montreal that in the mid to late sixties had people eagerly reading from week to week in order to truly join the discussion, or leading Seniors' discussion groups in so many Residences around Montreal. Martin was passionate about bringing children and art together, and nurturing that artistic and imaginative impulse that so quickly goes dormant if not primed. One facet of that passion was his love of stories, of poetry, and of nature, and his recognizing the uniqueness of the individuals he met, even in passing. So very many people have felt his influence; so many then we hope will share and extend his legacy.