

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Foreign Languages & Literatures
300 Pearson Hall
Ames, IA 50011
e-mail jrdow@iastate.edu
Tel 515 294-4555
FAX 515 294-9914

January 19, 2006

To My Dear Friend, Joshua A. Fishman:

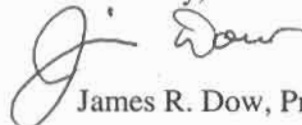
My sincere congratulations on this wonderful occasion, your 80th birthday. Please accept my regrets for not being there, but as is so often the case, I am once again in my second home, in Europe. I wish you and your wife and family all the best, in health and happiness, and of course in your work. We are all amazed at your continuing impact on the field of socio-linguistics over the many, many years, and most particularly since your retirement in 1991. May you have even more happy and productive years.

When we met, now more than two decades ago on an NEH Summer Seminar, in 1984 at Stanford, there was no way to know what an influence you would have on my professional life, and for that I want you to know how very much I appreciate your attention to me and my work. When we sat quietly in your office and you asked me to edit and publish the papers of the seminar participants, I was so very gratified that you would ask me to do the work. The two volumes of *IJSL* are a testament to our work together so many years ago. Soon after that you came to my university for a lecture, and immediately drew the largest crowd ever to attend a linguistics lecture here. I have been in that room many times since your lecture in 1986, and each time I think of the standing-room only crowd and the intense discussion afterwards. Your topic was "What is Happening to Spanish in the United States," and many of the local Hispanics came to hear you. When you presented your statistical data and talked about the future of Spanish, many wanted to counter your arguments, but you pointed out how many languages had large numbers of speakers in the US, only to find that the shift to English was inevitable. The discussion continued with the large group that showed up at my house later for a reception.

Then, in 1990 you asked me to respond to the Focus issue on Yiddish, and in 1991 to edit one of the many *Festschriften* being prepared for you, which I happily did. In 1997, just when I finished a long chairmanship in my department, you asked me to write the entry on "Germany" for your new *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*. What you could not have realized, was how astounded I was to be asked to represent the language and ethnic identity of an entire country, and how very much this piece solidified my own identity among my German and Austrian colleagues. I was tired from my administrative years, but the article helped jump-start my post-chair years.

Well, Dear Joshua, that is the kind of personal attention that you have paid to one individual, who then profited immensely because of that caring. Thank you for being who you are, personally and professionally, and thank your family for me for tending to you in such a way that you are the person you have become during your decades of teaching, research, and professional service. I am most honored to be asked to send you my congratulations.

Sincerely,



James R. Dow, Professor emeritus of German