

## Jack Garrety

In the early 1990s as I remember, this very handsome twenty something year-old appeared in my class. He had shockingly beautiful blonde hair and a well formed body and sat in the front row, somewhat provocatively. As he appeared to me to be gay and somewhat flamboyant, I tended to shy away from him, though I was standing near to where he was sitting when I lectured to the class. Over the course of the semester it became apparent to me that he was unusually brilliant and studious, to my surprise, and so I began to pay more attention to him and he began to stop by the office. And in due course because he did outstandingly both in class discussion, office discussion and exams, I realized I was dealing with an unusually capable mind. Consequently I eventually hired him to do some typing, research and other work for me. A semester or so later he came and asked me if he could do an honors paper with me and I decided, yes, that I would like to work with him. Unfortunately he had no command of any foreign language, and so I determined that he could do a study on gay artists, mainly painters and sculptors in Florence during the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries – that is at the height of the Italian Renaissance when Florence was playing a role almost as important in its time as Athens did during the Classical period of Greek history. At that time there was a brilliant extensive, roughly forty-odd volume, Encyclopedia of world art and the University had acquired it for its library but not yet put out in the shelves, it was in a librarian's office. So I went over and looked at it and realized that it was a brand-new wonderful compilation that he could use for his honors paper. Under my supervision he did a brilliant job and essentially showed that during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the great Florentine gay artists tended to live in the same neighborhood, like a gay ghetto or a bohemian quarter if

you prefer. In their wills they often bequeathed or their belongings to their long-time assistants, who had presumably been their boyfriends or models at one time or another. So he showed all this I think beyond reasonable doubt and then, when he turned it in, the writing was so rough I couldn't believe it and I told him that the ideas and research were great but the writing was terrible. So he redid it and it came out in almost as perfect English. So he got his honors degree, the special special readings paper, and then he developed some real estate in Western Massachusetts but also went and did graduate work at Trinity College in Connecticut. There his supervisor was a woman and he got quite a bit of feminist perspectives, while converting the honors paper into a masters' thesis. I haven't seen it but I'm sure it's on record at Trinity College. But then Jack Garrety went off to Korea and I've lost contact with him. He was once back in Boston and called me in the middle of the night but I didn't have time to talk and he didn't call back and I tried to contact him by email but I'm taking the liberty of putting up under his name this absolutely provocative and I think profound study. If anyone wanted to go further into it they can go to Trinity College in Connecticut. One reason that Jack went off to Korea were I think he still is teaching English, is that he was unable to learn a foreign language, although he tried. It's a problem that many people experience when they begin studying foreign languages late in life have and I had told him that I thought he needed to get a PhD, maybe from UMass but since he had trouble learning a foreign language he didn't think he could make it there. And I thought at that time that without a foreign language, especially Italian, German and possibly even French, he couldn't make this into a publishable work. But now I realize that it is publishable as a working paper and that if anyone could pursue it further they could look up his masters' thesis at Trinity

College. So that's all the introduction I'm giving to one of the most wonderful students I've ever had – Jack Garrety.