

A.R. Pete Diamond

September 20, 1950 – September 5, 2011

by Louis Stulman

On September 5, 2011 the Society of Biblical Literature lost one of its most esteemed and iconoclastic members, A. R. Pete Diamond; and many of us lost a dear friend. Pete died at home in Santa Barbara exactly 17 months from the night he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. His wife Carol was at his side.

Pete was a true renaissance figure: an author, poet, artist, photographer, musician, boogie boarder, wine connoisseur, gardener, movie enthusiast, “friend of cats,” lover of science fiction, especially vampire flicks [yes, vampire flicks], a seeker of truth (see the following notice at <http://www.independent.com/obits/2011/sep/19/r-pete-diamond/>). He was an impressive theorist, indeed one of our most daring interpreters and teachers. If biblical scholars were celebrities, G-d forbid, Pete would have been a rock star by the force of his intellect and by the charisma of his lovely smile. Carolyn J. Sharp expressed it well to Pete’s wife, Carol: “he was a brilliant, outside-the-box thinker, whose agility and courage of intellect truly inspire.”

Professor Diamond did much to frame current conversations on Jeremiah research. He was the architect of the present SBL Group on the book of Jeremiah and its recently published *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed* (2011).

Pete is perhaps best known for his Cambridge dissertation on the Confessions of Jeremiah, as well as his work on Jeremiah in the 2003 Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible.

It made perfect sense to me that he was asked to write the piece on “The Jeremiah Guild in the 21th century” for *Recent Research on the Major Prophets* (edited by Alan Hauser). Robert Carroll had penned the earlier two essays on Jeremiah. And Pete and Robert were cast in the same mold—actually both broke the mold!

He was a partner in crime with Kathleen M. O’Connor and me on *Troubling Jeremiah* in 1999 and a 2008 issue of *Interpretation* on “Images of Jeremiah.” But there was so much more to it than these and other joint publications. As Kathleen put it in her recent book, there was a depth of friendship and conversation that made it difficult at times to assign authorship to any one of us, which was “a rare joy.” Rare, indeed, and yet many, including his dear friend Else Holt, were the beneficiaries of Pete’s scholarly collaboration.

Beyond his rich professional life, Pete Diamond was a kind and gracious man who enriched us all beyond measure. We will sorely miss his good humor and honesty, his creativity and generosity, his wild reviews of vampire movies and tips on grand Santa Barbara chardonnays. But Pete will live on in our hearts and in our labors, especially when we proceed with integrity and courage. Cheers to you, Pete, our colleague and dear friend.