



Albert Pietersma
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University of Toronto

September 28, 1935 – March 25, 2025

Albert Pietersma passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at the age of 89. He was born on September 28, 1935 in a small town in The Netherlands called Opende, which is in the province of Groningen just across the eastern border of the province of Friesland. He was the second eldest in a family that included four boys and two girls. In the Spring of 1951, the Pietersmas emigrated to Canada, settling on a farm near Brockville, Ontario. Al took a job at a nearby factory and also worked on the farm.

In 1956, realizing that farming was not really something he wanted to do for the rest of his life, he began high school studies by correspondence and started to think about the kind of career he would like to have. Two years later, he enrolled as an undergraduate at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan and fell in love with the Classics, especially Greek Classical Literature. The greatest love of his life, however, was Margaret Stadig, a native of Amsterdam, who had also emigrated to Canada and come to Brockville. They were married in August of 1960.

Al graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics and Philosophy from Calvin College in 1962, and then in 1965 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Calvin Theological Seminary. He went on to do graduate studies at the University of Toronto, majoring in Hebrew Language and Literature, with a first minor in Septuagint and a second minor in Aramaic-Syriac. He completed his PhD program in 1970 with a dissertation that was focused on the Chester Beatty Papyri of Genesis (Rahlfs manuscripts 961 and 962), and which led ultimately to his publication of the volume entitled *Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri IV and V: A New Edition with Text-Critical Analysis* (ASP 16; Toronto/Sarasota: Samuel Stevens Hakkert and Company, 1977). This doctoral research coincided with the work of his Doktorvater, John Wevers, who was at that time preparing the critical edition of Genesis for the Göttingen Septuaginta series. Al was appointed to a tenured position at the University of Toronto where he and Wevers introduced a PhD program in Septuagint Studies, and Al remained on the faculty there until his retirement in 2001.

Al played a significant role in the leadership and development of the International

Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, serving in various capacities over the years, as Secretary and Archivist (1972-80), President (1980-87), Immediate Past President (1987-93) and Honorary President (1993–). He was a remarkable scholar whose contributions to the discipline of Septuagint Studies were stimulating and impactful, not least in his capacity as Joint-Editor-in-Chief (along with Benjamin Wright) of *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (OUP, 2007) and of the forthcoming Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on the Septuagint series (SBL Press). Included among his numerous publications were monographs and essays dealing with Greek and Coptic papyrus texts of Genesis, Psalms, The Apocalypse of Elijah, The Acts of Phileas, and The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres, as well as with topics pertaining to the textual criticism, exegesis, and hermeneutics of the Septuagint. A representative sampling of his work on the critical study of the Septuagint is found in a collection of essays edited by Cameron Boyd-Taylor entitled *A Question of Methodology: Albert Pietersma, Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (BTS 14; Leuven: Peeters, 2013). On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, Al was presented with a *Festschrift* entitled *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (ed. Robert J. V. Hiebert, Claude E. Cox, and Peter J. Gentry; JSOTSup 332; Sheffield Academic Press, 2001; Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2009).

Al was an attentive mentor to his students and a model of conscientious, scholarly rigor to students and colleagues alike. He was also the devoted husband of Margaret, a loving father to their children, a beloved grandfather, and an enduring friend who, along with Margaret, extended generous hospitality to many. In addition to his scholarly pursuits, Al enjoyed woodworking, being a handyman, and gardening, and he was an avid environmentalist. He will be greatly missed.