

**In Memoriam: Joseph M. Williams,
1933–2008**

Joseph M. Williams, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago, Department of English Language and Literature, died of heart failure on February 22, 2008, at his home in South Haven, Michigan. He is survived by his wife, Joan Steck, three children from his first marriage, two stepsons, and seven grandchildren.

Williams was a renowned English scholar and linguist who focused on the history and craft of writing. He was the author of several landmark works on writing pedagogy, including *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. First published in 1981, the ninth edition of this definitive work appeared in 2007. Although not specifically tailored to legal writing, this style manual has been used extensively by legal writing instructors. Williams' other notable works include *The Craft of Argument*, *The Craft of Research*, and *Origins of the English Language: A Social and Linguistic History*.

Williams began teaching at the University of Chicago in 1965. He was one of the founders of the University of Chicago's Little Red Schoolhouse writing course, an instructional

program for undergraduate, graduate, and law students that focuses on the fundamentals of writing and the importance of storytelling. This course, also known as Advanced Academic and Professional Writing, has had a profound impact on writing programs worldwide. Williams was also a founding partner of Clearlines, a communications consulting firm that trains writers in corporations, law firms, government agencies, and academic institutions. Through Clearlines, Williams worked with scores of lawyers, helping them improve the structure and clarity of their professional communications. In 2006, Williams received the Legal Writing Institute's Golden Pen Award for his lifetime contributions to legal writing.

Readers of *Perspectives* benefited from Joseph M. Williams' and Gregory Colomb's contributions to the Writing Tips column. Over the past 12 years, they co-authored 11 columns, focusing attention on effective storytelling, coherent prose, and effective client communications. Williams' final column appears in this issue, Spring 2008. The *Perspectives* editorial board and readers are grateful for Joe Williams' passion for clarity and elegance in writing and his contributions to the writing community.