

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

2018-2019 Newsletter

In Memoriam 2013-2018

Richard Beeman

John Welsh Centennial Professor Emeritus of History

Professor Richard Beeman, John Welsh Centennial Professor of History Emeritus died on September 5, 2016, at the age of 74. Professor Beeman spent more than forty years—his entire professional career—as a member of the History Department faculty. He was an engaged and passionate teacher, a distinguished scholar, and an active member of the Penn and the larger Philadelphia community.

Please see the [tribute](#) written by Penn Professor Bruce Kuklick, Nichols Professor of American History Emeritus.

F. Hilary Conroy

Professor Emeritus of History

Francis Hilary Conroy, Professor Emeritus of History, passed away peacefully at his home in Media, Pennsylvania, in January 2015 at the age of 95. Dr. Conroy pioneered East Asian history at the University of Pennsylvania, where he taught from 1951 to 1990.

Professor Conroy was a pioneer in many ways, both as a historian of Asia and as a practitioner of peacemaking. He established the East Asian history program at Swarthmore College in 1953. In the following year, he was one of the first Fulbright scholars at Tokyo University. After joining the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), he worked for the American Friends Service Committee's international seminar program in Tokyo while also teaching at International Christian University in 1958–59. His efforts to understand why and how Japan annexed Korea resulted in his masterful study *The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868–1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*, the first such study in English, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1960 and dedicated "To my wife [Charlotte], without whom this work would have been written in pencil." Professor Conroy taught the first course in Asian American studies, entitled the Asian American Experience, which was also one of the first of its kind nationally. He served as a senior specialist at the East-West Center in 1965–66. He also cofounded the Conference for Peace Research in History and its journal, *Peace and Change*. As the Vietnam War escalated, he helped establish the Committee for Concerned Asian Scholars. He was active in the Oriental Club of Philadelphia, the Asian American Council of Greater Philadelphia, the Association for Asian Studies, the Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees, the Center for Migration Studies, Interchange for Pacific Scholarship, and the American Historical Association.

Dr. Conroy's full obituary is available [here](#).

James C. Davis

Professor Emeritus of History

Professor James C. Davis, 85, of Philadelphia, a retired history professor, writer, and johnny-come-lately painter, died Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016 of heart disease at Cathedral Village, where he had lived for three years.

Dr. Davis was a professor of European history at Penn for 34 years before retiring in 1994 as professor emeritus. He served as chair of the department of history from 1989-1990. Dr. Davis served on the Senate Executive Committee and other Faculty Senate Committees throughout his time at Penn. He was also co-chair of the ad-hoc Adult Literacy Committee which was created to help Philadelphia's 500,000 adults who could not read (*Almanac* February 24, 1987).

Dr. Davis wrote several books, including *So Far, So Good: An Historian's Memoirs*; *The Human Story: Our History from the Stone Age to Today*; and *A Venetian Family and Its Fortune: 1500-1900*, published by the American Philosophical Society in 1975.

Please see the full obituary published in the [Penn Almanac](#).

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Robert F. Engs

Professor Emeritus of History

Robert F. Engs, Professor Emeritus of History passed away January 14, 2013, at age 69.

After earning a BA from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 1965, where he was one of only a handful of African American students, Dr. Engs received his PhD in history from Yale University in 1972. While at Princeton, he participated in founding of the Princeton Summer Studies Program, an intensive college preparatory program for minority and disadvantaged New Jersey public high school students, which became the model for the Upward Bound programs of the late 1960s.

Dr. Engs began his career at the University of Pennsylvania in 1972 when he was appointed assistant professor of history. A year after joining the faculty, Provost Eliot Stellar appointed him as the director for minority faculty recruitment. He is credited for playing a distinct role in enhancing the presence of minorities in both the faculty and student bodies at the University. He was promoted to associate professor in 1979 and to full professor in 2000. He became emeritus in 2010.

Please see Penn's full [tribute here](#).

Michael Katz

Walter H. Annenberg Professor Emeritus of History

Michael B. Katz, the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History, died on August 23 from cancer at age 75.

Dr. Katz came to Penn as a full professor in 1978 and chaired the history department from 1991-1995 and 2011-2012.

He co-directed the Urban Studies Program from 1983 until 1996. Early in his tenure as co-director, he restructured the curriculum, balancing multi-disciplinary coursework with a core of shared experiences and turned Penn's program into a model for other such programs around the country. He combined academic rigor and student engagement with the wider community. Dr. Katz also inaugurated the annual Urban Studies lecture to bring a major urban scholar to campus. "Just as important to Michael as the lecture was the lunchtime discussion with our seniors, at which they questioned the lecturers' methods and conclusions," said Mark Stern and Elaine Simon, co-directors of the Urban Studies Program. "As in his own interaction with students, Michael saw these sessions as an opportunity to illuminate the puzzles and discoveries of intellectual life as the seniors completed their papers."

Please see his full [Penn tribute page here](#).

Murray Murphey

Professor Emeritus of History

Murray Griffin Murphey, Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania, died December 6, 2018. He was 90 years old.

He got his BA from Harvard in 1949. He went on to study for a PhD at Yale in American Studies. In 1953-1954, in a fellowship year, he worked with R. B. Braithwaite, the famed positivist philosopher of science at Cambridge University in England. He returned to New Haven in 1954 to complete his dissertation under the direction of the renowned linguist Rulon Wells. Dr. Murphey received a two-year appointment at Penn as a Rockefeller Fellow, and in 1956 he was appointed as an assistant professor of American Civilization, achieving a full professorship in 1966. He served as chair of the department, and for a time edited the journal of the American Studies Association, *American Quarterly*. Much later he received a life-time achievement award from the Association.

Please see [Penn's full tribute here](#).