

use of sources, and their elegant exposition of his point of view. In addition to his 'nativism book' (as he termed it) and his monograph on the development of his field of American history, Higham also edited a number of volumes, and wrote many articles and reviews in a scholarship noteworthy for its breadth, eclecticism, and duration.

As a scholar and teacher, Higham was generous with his attention, especially to younger scholars and students, serious about ideas and their consequences, and always engaged in the most pressing issues facing his discipline (at one point he drafted a statement on plagiarism for the American Historical Association) and the society in which he lived. He was an exacting critic, finding strength in the work of his students and colleagues, and offering criticism free of personal rebuke and always making positive suggestions. He was a formidable presence, tall and angular, and he spoke slowly with a deep, bass voice that always commanded attention.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-five years—Eileen, a clinical psychologist—four children, and seven grandchildren.

William L. Joyce

MARTIN V. RIDGE

In losing Martin Ridge, we lost both a great human being and a true polymath—gifted scholar, eloquent teacher, outstanding editor, and dedicated former director of research at the Huntington Library. To many, he personified that prestigious institution with his drive for perfection, passion for research, and profound commitment to helping fellow scholars. His traditional noontime walks were symbolic of his approach to learning. They became a peripatetic school for scholars who tramped through the lovely Huntington grounds with Martin leading the way while holding forth on some subject of professional interest. It was the graduate

school experience, only repeated under more pleasant conditions and at the same challenging level.

Born in Chicago on May 7, 1923, Martin attended Chicago State University, served three years in the United States Maritime Service, and then returned to Northwestern University to continue his studies, receiving his doctorate in 1951. His dissertation, a definitive biography of the prominent Populist leader, Ignatius Donnelly, was published in 1962, but such was its acclaim that it was reprinted in 1991.

Martin's teaching career began in Westminster College in 1955, and was followed by an eleven-year stay at San Diego State University. He then moved to Indiana University in 1966 where he served both as history professor, and as editor of the *Journal of American History*—the profession's leading publication. As editor, Martin made an enormous contribution by helping guide the profession through the tumultuous sixties. His courage, honesty, and fairness earned him the respect of all—even those who disagreed with him. One trait during his tenure was his ability to keep controversies from becoming personal or vituperative and counterproductive.

Martin's reputation as a publishing scholar rests largely on his work in the fields of frontier and western history. Arriving at the Huntington in 1977—where Frederick Jackson Turner had served as the first research associate—Martin joined forces with his Northwestern mentor, Ray Allen Billington, the outstanding proponent of the Turner frontier thesis. They continued to revise Billington's *Westward Expansion*, the reigning textbook in the field, for over forty years and, after Billington's death in 1981, Martin inherited the mantle. With the rise of the 'new western historians' in the 1980s, the Turner thesis was subjected to scholarly assault, and Martin faced another major controversy. As in his work as editor, he met criticism with equanimity and never resorted to *ad hominem* arguments. Western history as a result became more respected and accepted by American scholars than it had been for over half a century.

Martin's impressive scholarship and remarkable editorial career enabled him to exercise an unprecedented influence in the history of the American West. He authored, edited, or co-edited seventeen books and more than forty articles, and served on the editorial boards of over a dozen journals. His reputation resulted in his election as president of the Western History Association and of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. While working at the Huntington, he was appointed to the teaching staff of the California Institute of Technology in 1981.

After his election to the American Antiquarian Society in 1982, Martin's ties to the institution became especially close by virtue of his Huntington position. He met with other members of the Independent Libraries Research Association (IRLA) to address issues of mutual interest. In Martin's case, that involved working with other educational directors.

When he retired in 1992, a symposium was held in his honor at the Huntington, and a *festschrift* published in 1997. Despite his official retirement, he continued to assist scholars. Shortly before his death, he edited the manuscript on which I was working—a service he generously performed for many others, as well. Martin died in Pasadena on September 22, 2003, after a lingering illness. He is survived by his wife, Sally, two sons, a daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren; another son, Curtis, died two years earlier.

His presence at the Huntington, where he was a living legend, will be sorely missed. Greeting new scholars, he would plunge immediately into a stimulating conversation that showed his keen mind and amazing grasp of historiography. Further talks during morning and afternoon coffee breaks revealed his liberal bent of mind, passion for politics, openness to all points of view, and restless pursuit of the truth. He refused to settle for second best, insisting always on the highest standards of scholarship. His wit was quick, meant to enlighten, not to hurt, and his humane qualities endeared him to those who knew him well.

Martin wrote his own epitaph, in one sense, while describing Ignatius Donnelly: 'It is the way in which a man accepts his fate,

the way in which he faces his environment, that affords him the opportunity—under both pleasant and trying circumstances— [to] add genuine meaning to his life.’ Martin’s greatness as a human being rose from the magnificent way with which he faced his fate—which had both pleasant and trying circumstances—and gave genuine meaning to his life.

George Athan Billias

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