

children: Amy Edith Johnson of Jersey City, New Jersey; Robert Flynn Johnson of San Francisco, California; and Richard Andrew Johnson of Braintree, Massachusetts. She died on April 16, 2007, at Exeter, New Hampshire, at the age of ninety-one.

John M. Keenum

JAY WILLIAM FLIEGELMAN

Jay Fliegelman, bibliophile, scholar, teacher, and mentor, died on August 14, 2007, at his home in Menlo Park, California, from complications of liver disease and cancer. He was fifty-eight. Jay grew up in New York City, the son of a physician, receiving his undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University and the Ph.D. from Stanford University. After completing his work at Stanford, he stayed on to teach American literature and American studies. At the time of his death he held the title of Coe Professor of American Literature at Stanford. Jay authored two influential works in American studies, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority* and *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language and the Culture of Performance*. At the time of his death he had in progress an edition of Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*, which Stephen D. Andrews has completed for publication by Bedford/St. Martins in 2008.

The much-anticipated work based on his own collections, 'Belongings: Dramas of American Book Ownership, 1660-1860,' was not sufficiently advanced for publication, but will form the basis of a catalogue of the books which now form part of Stanford Library's Special Collections, as Jay wished. This catalogue is to be completed by his students. Jay was a passionate collector of books, particularly of 'association copies,' works that bore a special relation to their owners. He owned Thomas Jefferson's copy of *Paradise Lost*—a copy lent to James Madison, who wrote his name in it before Jefferson reclaimed it and reasserted his ownership by

his own signature. Another gem among his collections was an autobiography of Frederick Douglass inscribed to the English woman who had purchased his freedom. Jay was constantly on the trail of some new treasure. His collection seems always to have been at the forefront of his consciousness, as when, by his own account, he occasionally got up from bed, went to his bookshelves, and rearranged the collection in order to see what this different configuration would reveal.'

Jay's relationship with the American Antiquarian Society was a particularly fruitful one. Elected to membership in 1994, he held during the 1998-99 academic year the first Mellon Distinguished Scholar in Residence fellowship at AAS. As the recipient of another fellowship running concurrently with his, I associated with him daily and was among the audience for several fascinating presentations on his project, the book based on his own collections and the stories they told. He was unsurpassed at uncovering significance in what on first glance might appear to be the most tenuous of connections. A case in point was Jay's copy of *Walden*, originally owned by a neighbor of Thoreau's. The owner's single annotation was the name 'David Henry Thoreau' appearing at the end of the text. This was in fact the given name of the author, who had himself changed the order of his first and middle names. This seemingly insignificant detail gave rise to Jay's analysis of how Thoreau appeared to many of his neighbors. Jay's talks on his collection were, in fact, among the most compelling I have ever witnessed in a scholarly context. He spoke from only sketchy notes, believing, he said, that what an audience wanted above all else was to see 'Man Thinking.' And see that we did, as Jay wove his engrossing stories with his revealing analysis, throwing his mind and heart and body into the effort, sometimes perspiring visibly with the exertion.

Aside from pursuing his own project during his year at AAS, Jay generously provided guidance for the other fellows in residence. He always had time for reading lengthy manuscripts for us, for giving invaluable advice and even more crucial encouragement. I

for one will never forget the moral support that he afforded my own project. Jay continued his close association with AAS when he spent two weeks in Worcester in the summer of 2006 to lead the History of the Book Summer Seminar and a teacher institute for the growing cohort of area high school teachers benefiting from the scholars associated with the Society. The glowing reports of the students in the seminar are documented in *The Book* (July 2006), as is his own assessment: 'Exhausted and flooded with adrenaline,' he wrote, 'I left having learned as much as I taught and, as in the past, deeply appreciative of the staff and collections of AAS.'

Given his wit, intelligence, originality, and passion, it is not surprising that Jay's classroom performance won him various teaching awards at Stanford. But while I never saw him in the classroom, I was in a position to witness another side of his teaching persona. Throughout his year at AAS he evidenced his devotion to his students back at Stanford as he advised and aided them in their job searches. He took very seriously his responsibility of serving as a reference for them. The vigor with which he promoted their careers revealed, in fact, that this was not simply a duty for him but a calling: to see his students well placed was a point of pride. A few months before his death Jay was able to participate in and enjoy a 'Jayfest,' an event organized at Stanford that gathered his students from across the country. This unique occasion celebrating his teaching and mentoring constituted a remarkable tribute to his influence.

All who knew Jay were aware of his great love of fun and zest for life. For the last few months of the fellowship year the fellows went out to dinner together each Thursday evening. All of us have vivid memories of these occasions of which Jay was the natural center, his wit, intelligence, and ebullience on display. Once, in gently criticizing the personality of a mutual friend whom we both admired, he said that he found the person overly serious. 'I would like to see a little *silliness*,' he remarked. In regard to Jay himself, there was no lack of silliness. Coexisting alongside his

creative brilliance and his intellectual seriousness, his openness and his generosity, it was one of his most endearing traits.

He leaves his wife, Christine Guth, a historian of Asian art, and many devoted students who are making their own professional contributions.

Helen M. Deese

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