almost anywhere you look for that matter, and when you see what he helped fashion for the enduring benefit of this community, it is very easy to 'keep smiling.'

Warner Fletcher

JOHN HIGHAM

John Higham, retired professor of American history at the Johns Hopkins University and a major commentator on American immigration history and nativism, American cultural history, and American historiography, died peacefully in his sleep at his home in North Baltimore on July 26, 2003. He was eighty-two years old.

Born and reared in Jamaica, New York, he earned his bachelor's degree in history at Johns Hopkins in 1941, and served with the historical division of the 12th Army Air Force in Italy. Following his discharge in 1945, Higham served as assistant editor of the *American Mercury*, founded by H. L. Mencken, before resuming graduate study in American history at the University of Wisconsin. He studied there under the intellectual historian Merle Curti, receiving his Ph.D. degree in 1949. Over an academic career that spanned across more than five decades, he held teaching positions at the University of California, Los Angeles; Rutgers University; Columbia University; and the University of Michigan before returning to Johns Hopkins permanently as the John Martin Vincent Professor of History in 1973. That same year, he was elected president of the Organization of American Historians. In addition, Higham received many fellowships and other honors in his distinguished career.

Higham's first book, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (Rutgers University Press, 1955), quickly won him acclaim for his discerning investigation into the complex set of beliefs that comprised nativism. Higham depicted these beliefs against the backdrop of American nationalism and

the strains of a rapidly industrializing America that caused nationalism to display aspects of xenophobia in periods of social tension. Higham also pursued investigations in the related area of ethnicity, writing of the subtle interplay between ethnic identity and American nationalism. On these topics, he published a volume of essays, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (Athenaeum, 1975).

Higham was also deeply interested in intellectual and cultural history. He attempted to reconcile two competing systems of thought: the idealism that he was taught as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins, and that of instrumentalism, of which a principal proponent was his Wisconsin mentor, Merle Curti. As an early commentator on the state of intellectual history, Higham organized with Paul Conkin a conference on that field, emphasizing the contextual setting of ideas and trying to find links to the emergent field of social history. A volume of essays from that conference was published as *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). Indeed, his teaching reflected this division as he frequently taught American history using the phrase 'society and thought' in the course titles. Earlier, he had written two essays on American cultural history, one on the American 1850s, 'From Boundless to Consolidation: The Transformation of American Culture, 1848–1860' (William L. Clements Library, 1969), and the other on the 1890s, 'The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s' (published in *The Origins of Modern Consciousness*, edited by Horace John Weiss [Wayne State University Press, 1965]), that treated cultural history as reflecting the spirit of an age and illuminating the sources of division and unity in cultures. His talk, 'Indian Princess and Roman Goddess: The First Female Symbols of America,' delivered to the Society's semiannual meeting in Boston in April 1990 (Higham had been elected to membership in 1976), reflected his continuing interest in American cultural history. That essay was published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* in 1990.

Higham was a consummate historian, fascinated by the craft of his calling and the interactions among its practitioners. In the early 1950s, he wrote an article that labeled a group of scholars as 'consensus historians,' criticizing them for homogenizing the American past and focusing on themes to celebrate. In 1965 he published *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (Prentice-Hall, 1965), which illuminated the development of American history from its origins to the mid-twentieth-century. He encouraged historians to be morally engaged, to 'join historical scholarship with contemporary social concern.' To that end, he participated in the Selma marches with a group of American historians in March 1965, but he was disappointed by the fragmentation and loss of cohesion that characterized American culture in later years. His response was to refocus his work, emphasizing the connections among peoples, not the attributes that separated them. In 1999 he updated an article on race in America that he had written twenty-five years earlier, 'Another American Dilemma,' arguing that the tension between assimilation and persistent ethnicity was resolved in what he described as 'pluralistic integration.'

Influenced by his upbringing in a diverse community in New York City, and further shaped, like so many of his generation, by the inclusive values that were part of the New Deal and then World War II, Higham believed in the possibilities of a pluralistic, democratic American nationalism, even as he criticized its excesses. He sought reconciliation of the many tensions and sources of conflict in American history by emphasizing unifying themes and common values. As a self-styled 'optimistic contrarian,' he retained a stubborn faith in the promise of a liberal American society. His preferred form of writing was the essay, and he produced three volumes of essays, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Indiana University Press, 1970), *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*, and *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture* (Yale University Press, 2001). These essays are noteworthy for their precise elaboration of argument, their judicious and exacting precision in the

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