

Obituaries

SYDNEY ECKMAN AHLSTROM

Sydney Eckman Ahlstrom, who joined the Society in 1979, died in New Haven on July 3, 1984, at the age of sixty-four. An authority on the history of American religion, he was best known to the world of scholarship for his *Religious History of the American People*, which won the National Book Award in 1973 and has been the standard work on the subject ever since. But his interests ranged beyond religion to every aspect of the history of ideas. His intellectual curiosity was unlimited, as was the excitement that he brought to the intellectual life of those who were privileged to know him.

Sydney completed his undergraduate degree at Gustavus Adolphus College in 1941 and his doctorate at Harvard in 1952. After beginning his teaching career at Harvard, he came to Yale in 1954, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The breadth of his interests was signaled by the fact that he divided his teaching among four different degree-granting departments: history, religious studies, American studies, and the Divinity School. To each he brought the humane and civilized outlook of the true intellectual. In summers and during sabbatical years he would be off to Europe, familiarizing himself with current developments in the life of the mind in one country after another. At the same time he took an active part in the Lutheran church.

At Yale, Sydney was beloved of his many students for the encouragement he gave to the most hesitant and tentative gropings after a new concept or insight. Although the quality of his learning is preserved and exhibited in his own writings, the force of his influence extends far wider, in the example he set and the impetus he gave to a whole generation of church

historians. Under his guidance many of the most penetrating recent studies of American intellectual life took shape. Sydney Ahlstrom has left a mark that will endure for many years.

Edmund S. Morgan

WARREN GILBERT DAVIS

Warren Gilbert Davis, a member of the Society since 1963, and a generous supporter for many decades, died in Worcester Memorial Hospital on August 2, 1985, at the age of ninety-seven. He was born in Worcester and lived here all his life.

He graduated from Worcester Academy in 1906 and from Yale in 1910. Each marked the beginning of a long association. For many years he was a trustee of Worcester Academy, serving as treasurer for twenty-seven years. As a loyal Yale alumnus, Mr. Davis became class agent in 1969 and continued this duty until his death. He also worked on the Bequest and Endowment Program, and pioneered the idea of corporate contributions in memory of retired executives. It was through his roommate at Yale that he met and married Anna Sears. The Davises celebrated their sixty-sixth wedding anniversary in June 1985.

After serving in the U.S. Army in World War I, he returned to Worcester to work again with his father at the Davis Press. During his seventy-five-year association with Davis Press, he served as treasurer for forty years, and continued to advise and counsel his two sons and younger associates as chairman of the board of Davis Press, Inc. He was a member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts and served as the New England representative on the board of the Printing Industry of America.

During his long life he was active in many Worcester organizations. He was a former director of the U.S. Envelope Company, Worcester County National Bank, Worcester County Institution for Savings, State Mutual Life Assurance Company,

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