

this claim is excessively modest. His portrait, which hangs in Room 12 in the Worcester County Courthouse where he presided for so many years, is a memorial to his unique blend of pragmatism, compassion, and fairness.

Judge Meagher was born December 7, 1908. He served as a major in the U.S. Army Air Corp during World War II, and received seven bronze stars and two presidential unit citations. He was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society at the 1976 annual meeting and died January 6, 1996, at the age of 87.

James C. Donnelly, Jr.

ALAN EDWARD HEIMERT

Alan Edward Heimert, Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University, died November 1, 1999, in Washington, D.C. A renowned scholar and teacher of early American literature and culture, Heimert introduced thousands of undergraduates to the complexity and beauty of the texts that described the 'complex fate' of being an American. In addition, he trained two generations of graduate students to carry on his life's work of decoding the implications of the American experience of authors ranging from Captain John Smith to those who grappled with the horror of the Civil War. He is survived by his wife, Arline, of Winchester, Massachusetts; a son, Andrew, of Washington, D.C.; a daughter, Larisa, of New Haven, Connecticut; and a sister, Marion Rees, of Los Altos, California.

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, on November 10, 1928, Heimert attended York Community High School in Elmhurst, Illinois, and then matriculated at Harvard College in the class of 1949. He received his A.B. in government, writing on the political theory of Abraham Lincoln; his M.A., in history, from Columbia a year later; and his Ph.D., in the history of American civilization, from Harvard in 1960, where he worked with Perry Miller, the forma-

tive presence in his intellectual life. In 1952 he was a teaching fellow in the undergraduate program of History and Literature at Harvard and then served in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1955. In 1961 he returned to Harvard as instructor of English and was promoted to associate professor in 1965. He was named Powell M. Cabot Professor in 1969.

He remained at Harvard for the rest of his career and served the institution in many capacities. Between 1972 and 1976, for example, he chaired the Department of English and American Literature and Language, and at different times administered the Program in History and Literature and the Committee on Higher Degrees in the History of American Civilization. In addition, he was a founding director of the Harvard South Africa Fellowship Program, which since 1981 has brought South African professionals to Harvard for study. He also served the university administration wisely during and in the aftermath of the student upheavals of 1968-69, when he served on the Faculty Committee on African and Afro-American Studies, the Committee of Fifteen, and the University Governance Committee. To many, though, he will best be remembered as the charismatic Master of Eliot House, a position in which he succeeded the legendary John B. Finley and held from 1968 to 1991. A true believer in the importance of House life to the undergraduate experience, he built unshakable loyalty among residents and worked incessantly to cultivate the life of the mind in that venue as well as in his classrooms.

Undergraduates who did not live in Eliot House most likely encountered him in English 70, the survey course in American literature that he taught for over thirty years. There I first met him in 1969, and the moment marked an epoch in my life, so much so that subsequently I took virtually every course that he offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I vividly recall his introductory lecture, when he explained to the uncomprehending crowd the greatness of a literature, which, he said ruefully, should have been taught us not by him but by F. O. Matthiessen and Perry Miller had their lives not ended prematurely. Heimert's

presence was immense and his voice incantatory as he then read and explicated passages from his beloved New England Puritans. He made students believe that early American authors continued to matter in American life and culture, and in their lives, and demanded that they understand what a privilege (albeit one with inordinate demands) it was to be American, and particularly so at Harvard.

Heimert's great work of scholarship was his *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (1966), a work of vast range and erudition. In it he overturned the regnant understanding of the clergy's role in preparing for the Revolution, that such 'enlightened' liberals as Boston's Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew paved the road to 1776. Instead, he argued, that role was assumed by evangelicals who had inherited and reinterpreted the theology of the magisterial Jonathan Edwards, whom Heimert, like his mentor Miller, regarded as one of the towering intellects and social theorists in American history. But Heimert's book, even though a tour-de-force of intellectual history, had the misfortune to appear at a time when many historians had taken the turn to demography and social history and so met with a mixed reaction. In the last fifteen years, however, its complex arguments have been rehabilitated by a new generation of scholars who have further elaborated Heimert's insights into the ideological origins of the American Revolution. Conceived as a continuation of Miller's great work, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (1953), *Religion and the American Mind* similarly deserves the description 'classic.'

In that work Heimert also suggested how the eighteenth-century evangelicals' influence lasted into and through the Age of Jackson, a subject he had adumbrated in other of his writings, particularly his brilliant essay '*Moby-Dick* and Political Symbolism' (1963). Among his other works are a seminal essay on 'Puritanism, Wilderness, and the Frontier' (1953); *A Nation So Conceived* (1963), a study of the national character prepared with Reinhold Niehbur; and two important critical anthologies. In-

deed, again like his mentor Miller, who in his *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (1950) contributed virtually a primary source, Heimert used the anthology format to forward his own revisionary understanding of pivotal moments in American intellectual history. Thus *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences* (1963), co-edited with Miller, and *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology* (1985), co-edited with Andrew Delbanco, stand as monuments to the range and depth of his analytic powers.

In 1995 the Division on American Literature to 1800 of the Modern Language Association conferred on Heimert its lifetime achievement award, 'Honored Scholar of Early American Literature.' In addition, he was an elected member of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, with which so many of his beloved American Puritans had been associated, and he has held the Lee Kuan Yew distinguished lectureship at the National University of Singapore. Closer to home, in 1997 Harvard awarded him the Joseph R. Levenson Memorial Teaching Award for excellence in undergraduate education. In April 1986 he was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society, and in his letter of acceptance fondly recalled many 'day journeys to Worcester in my graduate and junior faculty days, working away in your library and eating my box lunch on the lawn.'

Alan Heimert was a teacher who by his example demanded much and whose career, even in the face of declining health, testified to the life of the mind as a high and noble calling. Like so many who have worked in Antiquarian Hall, he was obsessed with the meaning of America and still believed, even in the aftermath of Vietnam and despite the nation's continuing struggle with the legacy of slavery, that its past could inspire us to higher things. His ability to convey this belief animated his teaching and scholarship, and its adoption and promulgation by the many graduate students whom he trained for the profession—Andrew Delbanco, Michael T. Gilmore, Robert Ferguson, Janice Knight,

Barry O'Connell, Richard Rabinowitz, and Teresa Toulouse, among them—insures his lasting legacy.

When I came to write a study of New England Puritanism, I could think of no one but Heimert, for he served as my best but potentially most critical imagined reader. And when I finished the work, I dedicated it to him, with these words, cribbed from the Reverend Samuel Hopkins's life of his mentor, Edwards, and which I still believe best describe Alan Heimert. 'He had an uncommon thirst for Knowledge, in the pursuit of which, he spared no Cost or Pains,' Hopkins wrote. And 'Tho' his Principles were *Calvinistic*,' he continued, 'yet he called no Man, Father. He thought and judged for himself, and was truly very much an Original.'

Philip F. Gura

BRUCE MURDOCK LEROY

Bruce M. Leroy, who served as director of the Washington State Historical Society from 1958 until 1983, died in Tacoma on November 29, 1999, after a long illness. Through his vision for conservation and exhibition of the collections and his management of the society's limited resources, the program of the historical society was transformed during his twenty-five-year tenure. His legacy includes the addition of a gallery in the early 1970s with a total of 25,000 square feet of new space that enabled the society to mount significant exhibitions. Two of these, which opened after his retirement, were 'Memorable Voyagers' in 1987 and 'Russian America' in 1990.

Coincidentally, two AAS members, the late Bob Hitchman and I, constituted the 1958 committee to find a new director. I met Bruce LeRoy at that time and we soon formed a bond through our shared interests in regional history. Bruce worked hard to maximize the society's limited resources and paid attention to de-

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