

## Obituaries

### ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (Betsey to those who knew her) was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society in the fall of 1990. A noted historian, receiving the National Humanities Medal as well as commendation by the Georgia State Senate and the Cardinal Wright Award from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars in 2003, she also was the daughter and wife of noted historians. She and her husband, Eugene Genovese (elected to membership in the spring of 1988), were long-time and generous supporters of the Society. It is with regret and sadness that we note Betsey's death on January 2, 2007, after a fifteen-year struggle with increasingly difficult health issues, beginning with multiple sclerosis.

Those same years famously saw a profound shift in perceptions of Betsey's politics and scholarship. At the beginning, many colleagues characterized Betsey as belonging to the far left. By the early 1990s, many cast her as belonging to the far right. Betsey never agreed with either characterization. This perceptual migration, various commentators have judged, transformed a widely influential scholar in French, Southern, and women's history and literature, and feminist thought into an increasingly controversial public intellectual. This perceptual shift failed to take into account the continuing scholarship and the continuities in the preoccupations and judgments informing that scholarship. It also failed to account for earlier controversies in which Betsey and her husband—founders together of the journal *Marxist Perspectives*—had been involved. Though personally disinclined to controversy,

Betsey relished her reputation for tough-mindedness and always stated her conclusions forcefully as well as subtly. Over time she became increasingly wry about the fact that many in her audiences on occasion lost the sophistication of her thought in the face of the vigor of her argument.

Betsey's scholarly work, throughout, is defined by central and abiding issues and themes, often in the context of place (defined socially, culturally, economically, and politically, as well as geographically). Her most recent book, *The Mind of the Master Class*, coauthored with her husband, links the influences of the eighteenth-century French history and thought that her father taught and she studied and wrote on at the beginning of her career with the American South that occupied much of her later study. In both French and Southern contexts, Betsey examined the challenges and workings of modernity on social structures and cultures as well as on individuals. In her writings on women and on race, she also examined the impact of class on social relations, structures, and expressive lives and productions. These questions intersect particularly tellingly in numerous essays on black and white Southern women writers, especially of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Long before her conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1995, Betsey wrote about the impulses to and the consequences of individualism from communitarian perspectives. Over the same decades, she reflected frequently as well on the meaning and operation of moral society and the moral order. These corporatist concerns were reinforced strongly not only by Marxist analysis, but also by the psychoanalysis in which Betsey received rigorous training. Her treatment of elite culture and its makers additionally drew on Gramscian assumptions about how elites shape their societies and share cultural norms and values. The interplay of these various preoccupations and perspectives gave Betsey's writings on individual autobiographical works and on autobiography as a genre great range and depth, as well as sensitivity and clarity.

Her conversion to Roman Catholicism did not change these concerns or many of her related judgments, but the extended process did make Betsey eventually a vigorous critic of elements of radical feminism and of various political and moral positions—on abortion, on euthanasia, and on other expressions, as she read them, of excessive, doctrinaire individualism and moral relativism. The reaction to these changing and unfolding views will continue to influence, from both the right and the left, the standing of Betsey's enormous output—more than one hundred and fifty articles and book chapters, as well as more than a dozen books. The range of that work will put full assessment beyond the reach of any single scholar at the same time as it will ensure Betsey's continuing relevance for many areas of scholarship. Extending that influence immeasurably are the work being done, and also the teaching, by Betsey's nearly five dozen former master's and doctoral students, first at Binghamton and then at Emory University, where she was the Eleonore Raoul Professor of the Humanities from 1988 until her death.

David Moltke-Hansen

### ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., a member of the Society since 2000, died on February 8, 2007, at the age of eighty-nine. Because of both his distinguished works of history and biography and his much-celebrated political activity, Professor Schlesinger was probably the best-known American historian of his generation. The engaging smile, the bow tie, and the horn-rimmed glasses were familiar to many Americans.

Schlesinger was born October 15, 1917, in Columbus, Ohio. Originally named Arthur Bancroft Schlesinger, he eventually changed his name to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., out of admiration for his father, a distinguished Harvard historian who himself

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