

views, a nationalist, and conservative who admired seventeenth-century France above all other periods in French history. But the Martin I especially take pleasure in remembering is the powerful writer and, for me on two occasions, generous host.

David D. Hall

WINTHROP D. JORDAN

Winthrop D. Jordan, an influential historian for more than three decades, and a member of the American Antiquarian Society since April 1970, died in his home in Oxford, Mississippi, on February 23, 2007, of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He was seventy-six years of age. His survivors include his wife Cora, three sons, Joshua, Mott, and Eliot, and three step-children, Michael, Steven, and Mary Beth.

Born on November 11, 1931, Winthrop Jordan spent his childhood in Worcester, Massachusetts, where his father, Henry Donaldson Jordan, taught history at Clark University. His mother, Lucretia Mott Churchill, was a direct descendant of Lucretia Mott, an early women's rights champion and an ardent abolitionist. When Jordan selected the illustrations for his college textbook in United States history, he proudly included a photograph of James and Lucretia Mott in the chapter on antebellum reform movements, 'America in Ferment.'

As an undergraduate at Harvard University, he took no history courses but adopted 'a much less demanding major' in social relations and, by his own admission, 'spent nearly as much time singing with the Harvard Krokodiloes as going to classes.' After graduation, he worked for a time in a management training program at Prudential Life Insurance Company and then took a job teaching history at Phillips Exeter Academy. He earned a master's degree at Clark University, and 'in a stroke of good fortune' was denied admission to Harvard and went instead to Brown University

for graduate work in colonial American history. He received his Ph.D. in 1960; served as a fellow at the Institute for Early American History and Culture, in Williamsburg, Virginia; and in 1963 joined the history faculty of the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught for the next two decades. In 1968 he helped to establish the upper division lecture course in the history of black people and race relations, and offered graduate and undergraduate seminars in the same subject.

These were turbulent years at Berkeley, and a strike for an ethnic studies department proved to be divisive and challenging. While maintaining his courses, Jordan became an associate dean for minority group affairs in the graduate school. In that position, he acted as a liaison between minority students and the administration. In the new course in black history, he encountered few of the problems that occurred at some colleges by refusing to transform as rich and demanding a subject as the history of African Americans into an exercise in 'relevant' politics or into a search for usable heroes. He brought to the classroom a meticulous respect for the complexity and integrity of the African American past that successfully avoided the dangers of sentimentality, romanticization, and condescension. He grappled with the ambiguities and paradoxes that make up the historical experience of black Americans, such as the then debated role of Africans in the Atlantic slave trade. Jordan left Berkeley in 1982 for the University of Mississippi. He was an F. A. P. Barnard Distinguished Professor and Professor of Afro American Studies, and in 1993 he became the first holder of the William F. Winter Professorship in History. He retired in 2003.

When the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in 1998 featured a session on the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, it recognized one of the pivotal historical works of this century. The session attested to the enormous impact of the book on generations of American historians. As the first large-scale study of race relations in the colonial period, it

remains required reading, indeed an indispensable starting point for anyone interested in the enduring force of race in American history—the depth, the pervasiveness, the centrality of race and the ways in which racial concepts from the very outset embedded themselves in American culture, and how they adapted to changes in laws and public attitudes. No book has done more to explain how the American nation and American identity came to be based on white supremacy, and the notion of black inferiority and black unfreedom. Among his many insights, Jordan suggested that race consciousness helped to produce slavery (rather than slavery producing race consciousness, as Oscar Handlin had argued).

That a single historian could move so confidently over a period and a literature of nearly three centuries was an extraordinary accomplishment for a scholar of any age. Along with his exhaustive research in the archives, Jordan effectively incorporated recent scholarship in the behavioral sciences on race, making bold use, for example, of the concepts of psychology; yet *White Over Black* is history in its best sense, approaching different problems and questions with a variety of intellectual tools. What sets this book apart from so much of the historical literature is the elegance of the prose. ‘My exposure to the barbarous prose of the social sciences led to a determination on my part to write in language that at least attempted a measure of grace and clarity.’ Winthrop Jordan never deviated from that commitment. He cared deeply about how the past should be communicated, and he insisted that his students share his concern for the English language.

For nearly forty-four years, I have cherished a friendship with Winthrop Jordan, as colleagues at Berkeley, as scholars and teachers with a shared interest in African American history and culture, and as co-authors of a textbook in American history that sought to bring into the historical consciousness of undergraduate students voices and experiences long excluded from the historical narrative. In his scholarship, as in his teaching, he was resourceful, tough-minded, intellectually rigorous, and demanding. He possessed a highly original mind that crossed over into many

different disciplines. He demonstrated in his books a superb blending of archival research and rigorous analysis. He appreciated, more perceptively than many historians, the interplay of thought and behavior, of folk and popular culture. His command of a wide range of sources was extraordinary, even when, as in *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek*, the sources were scanty and demanded meticulous editing, analysis, and imaginative powers. In that book, as in *White Over Black*, he also defined broadly and imaginatively cultural documentation and historical consciousness. That may help to explain why his work has not only had a major impact on American historians but has exerted a profound influence on anthropologists, folklorists, sociologists, and students of American and African American culture. He broke new historical paths. The new voices, the new historical experiences and cultural perspectives he brought to the writing and teaching of African American history have transformed profoundly how we think about the past. With his contributions, the history of black Americans and white racial attitudes did not simply become a part of the historical mainstream; it transformed and redefined that mainstream. Few scholars have examined with such resourcefulness and intelligence the origins of American attitudes toward race. For this achievement, he received the American Book Award and the Bancroft Prize—and a deserved recognition as one of the foremost historians of the twentieth century.

Leon F. Litwack

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