

In Memoriam: James Gray

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IN MEMORIAM

James Gray, long-time member of the Department of English and former Dean of Arts and Science, passed away this last week at the age of 89.

A native of Scotland, he saw active service in India and Burma with the British Army during World War II, ultimately rising to the rank of Major. After the war, he pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees at the Universities of Aberdeen and Oxford before receiving his PhD from the Universite de Montreal. From 1948 to 1972, he was a member of the Faculty of Bishop's University, becoming Professor and Head of the Department of English there in 1958, and Chair of the Humanities Division in 1971. In 1972, he accepted a position as Chair of the Department of English at Dalhousie University, and three years later he became Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science. In 1980 he was appointed Thomas McCulloch Professor of English. He was elected a Fellow both of the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society of Canada. He served as President of the Association of Canadian University Teachers of English, President of the Humanities Association of Canada, and Director of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities.

Though he wrote and taught on a wide variety of subjects, Jim was best known as a leading authority on the work of the eighteenth-century critic and sage, Samuel Johnson. Jim was a member of the Editorial Board of the authoritative *Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, and in 1978 he co-edited the volume of the Yale edition devoted to Johnson's sermons. An earlier book, *Johnson's Sermons: A Study*, was published by the Clarendon Press in 1972. Much like Johnson, Jim was a gifted speaker and conversationalist, and he was in high demand to present talks and addresses on Johnson's life and writings, and on many other topics besides, though Jim was characteristically self-deprecating about his performances, which, he once said, were "no doubt far too long."

Colleagues fondly remember Jim as a gentleman and a scholar, as a man of formidable intellect and great learning, and a deeply decent human being. They tell of how he could chat on any subject for as long as you would like, of how he went out of his way to make new members feel welcome, and of how, as Dean, he was the "good sheriff" brought in to mend a Faculty and to do so with sprightliness and little fuss. Jim loved golf, travel, philately and book collecting, and the country life at his home in the Annapolis Valley. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Pamela, and their daughter Caroline. Cremation has taken place and a private gathering in his honour will be held later this week.

No memorial to Jim should be without a quotation from his beloved Johnson. In 1989, as a condition of his appointment as McCulloch Professor Emeritus, Jim was asked to report on his research activities during his first year following retirement. Jim dutifully complied, submitting a lengthy list of publications and addresses he had produced over the previous twelve months. He then ended his report with this quotation from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*: "BOSWELL. 'Is not modesty natural?' JOHNSON. 'I cannot say, Sir, as we find no people quite in the state of nature; but I think the more they are taught, the more modest they are.'"