

In Memoriam:
ROBERT F. BYRNES
1917–1997

Robert F. Byrnes, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at Indiana University, died on 19 June at a family reunion in North Carolina. Along with his wife and devoted helpmate, Eleanor, and their seven children and seventeen grandchildren, a large academic family will also mourn his passing and will long remember him as an outstanding scholar and a pioneer of international education.

Born during the upheaval of the Russian revolution and World War I, he graduated from Amherst College in 1939 just before the upheaval of World War II. His graduate work at Harvard was interrupted by the war, during which he served in intelligence work, but he completed his Ph.D. in 1947 and began his teaching career at Rutgers. In 1948 he was chosen as one of the first Senior Fellows at the Russian Institute of Columbia University where he began research in Russian history which would occupy him for nearly fifty years.

He joined the Indiana University history faculty in 1956, having already begun the organization of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants which would create the U.S.–Soviet academic exchange program in 1958. After becoming chairman of the History Department in 1958, he founded the Russian and East European Institute in 1959. And in 1965 his remarkable leadership led to the establishment of the International Affairs Center, making Indiana University a paradigm of international studies subsequently emulated by many others.

Over the years, his work also led him into many national responsibilities, including serving on the board of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, shaping the early work of the Foreign Area Fellowship program of the Ford Foundation, editing the *American Historical Review*, and serving as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. He was a senior fellow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown, research fellow at the Hoover Institution, and visiting scholar at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and he received some of the most prestigious grants and several honorary degrees.

His impressive scholarly work included twenty books and many articles, among them the definitive work on Pobedonostsev and an excellent biography of V. O. Kliuchevskii. He also chronicled

the progress of Soviet–American academic exchanges and the history of East European studies in the United States, volumes which provide an invaluable record of developments in which he was a key influence and inspiration. One of his works published by Notre Dame bore a title which indeed defined much of his own career, *Awakening American Education to the World*.

Bob Byrnes had a most impressive record of achievements, but perhaps the greatest was the U.S.–Soviet academic exchange program. In the midst of the Cold War he not only saw the fundamental interest of the United States in opening contacts but insisted that, on the American side at least, the exchange would not be used for anything but academic purposes or be subjected to the sometimes fierce winds of political bias. The result was a program which not only reared a generation of better informed American scholars who benefitted from the incomparable experience of study in the Soviet Union but also brought many young Soviet scholars to this country, thereby planting some of the seeds of reform which later would sprout with extraordinary impact.

Those of us at Notre Dame also remember that our own development of international studies owed much to Bob Byrnes's support. It was typical of his magnanimous spirit that he participated in many meetings, lectures, and symposia at Notre Dame, donated several thousand books and periodicals to the Notre Dame library, authored chapters in several books published by our Committee on International Relations, contributed five major articles to *The Review of Politics*, served on its editorial advisory board from its inception in 1984, and indeed became a kind of godfather to Notre Dame's Program of Soviet and East European Studies.

He leaves an extraordinary legacy in his outstanding scholarship, his monumental organizational efforts, and his service to the profession, and behind it all was the quality of his spirit, his warm personality, his indefatigable commitment, and deeply rooted values. To borrow some words he once used in tribute to Stephen Kertesz, Notre Dame's director of international studies, Bob Byrnes was a great human being, a scholar and teacher and builder, who demonstrated admirable good sense, balance, fair-mindedness, clarity and wisdom, and whose shining integrity, civility and compassion, dignity and generosity made him a model for us all. His legacy will live for generations, but his presence will be sorely missed.

—George A. Brinkley