

IN MEMORIAM

The career of T. Cuyler Young was remarkable for its variety -- even among orientalists who frequently have combined service in other fields with their teaching and scholarship. He was by turns, minister, missionary, teacher, intelligence officer, diplomat and professor. To all these fields he brought energy, intelligence, a sense of service and a profound integrity.

Cuyler began his higher education at the College of Wooster where he received his Bachelor's degree, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1922 -- and where he returned in 1960 to receive an honorary Doctor of Letters. After further study at the Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University, he entered the ministry. Two years later he accepted a post as missionary in Iran. He remained there for eight years, acquiring in the course of his work an unparalleled first-hand knowledge of the country and its people, and a wide circle of friends who would stay with him for life. In Iran he married Helen Augusta Clarke, a fellow member of the mission. Their son, Cuyler, Jr., was born there as well.

In 1935 he left the Iran mission because he believed that the goal of missionary activity should be witness, not conversion. He returned to graduate school at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and, three years later, joined the faculty of the University of Toronto.

Cuyler set aside his teaching career during World War II to serve in the Office of Strategic Services. At its conclusion, he was persuaded to become the first Public Affairs Officer of the American Embassy in Tehran, a post he filled with great distinction. As part of his duties, he assisted in the establishment of the Iran-American Society, an institution that has, since its founding, played a central role in mediating between Iranian and western culture.

In 1947 he came to Princeton to resume his academic career. There he taught both courses in the language and culture of modern Iran -- indeed, initiating those studies in the United States -- and ancient Near Eastern history. In 1954 he succeeded Philip K. Hitti as chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages and held that position for fifteen years. During his tenure he presided over the gradual growth and expansion of both halves of his department to the point where it was possible to form two separate departments -- Near Eastern Studies and East Asian Studies -- on his retirement.

Cuyler's retirement was only nominal. For the next two years he taught at the University of Nairobi, helping to establish there a department of Islamic Studies. On his return to the United States in 1972, he was persuaded by friends and former students to accept the presidency of the American Institute of Iranian Studies, which he was able to rescue from near insolvency by his timely and unstinting efforts.

Failing health obliged him to resign the presidency in 1974, and to accept a somewhat less demanding form of retirement. Although during the last two years, he found time to begin revising a book on the foreign relations of the United States and Iran, to spend a term as visiting professor at the University of Texas, to give an occasional lecture at the university, and to continue to play an active role in the many organizations to which he had already contributed so much.

In early summer of this year he suffered a heart attack. Although he recovered from it with moderate success, he lost strength, and on the evening of August 31, was admitted to the Princeton Medical Center. He died several hours later, in his seventy-sixth year.

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