

OBITUARIES

Dr. John Munroe, 92, former UD history professor

John Andrew Munroe, Ph.D., 92, died Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2006, after a brief illness.

Dr. Munroe, one of Delaware's best known and respected historians, was born in Wilmington in 1914, educated in the city's public schools and at the University of Delaware. He began his career as an educator in 1936 teaching English and history at Newark High School, prior to his graduation from the university. After a few years he entered the graduate program in history at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1942, while still a graduate student, he accepted a position as instructor in the history department at the University of Delaware, where he taught until his retirement in 1982.

At the university he became an assistant professor in 1947, shortly after completing his Ph.D., and was named H. Rodney Sharp Professor of History in 1962. During this

period he served as assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, alumni secretary, and chairman of the department of history from 1952-1969. For 10 months in 1951-1952 he traveled across the United States as a Ford Foundation Fellow, visiting universities in the Midwest and on the Pacific Coast. Munroe crisscrossed the country together with his wife, Dorothy Levis Munroe, whom he met as a graduate student, and their young children. In Colorado he discovered a trove of papers of an eminent 19th-century Delaware statesman and businessman, Louis McLane, who became the subject of a scholarly biography by Dr. Munroe.

In later years he and his wife continued to travel whenever possible, around Delaware and other parts of the globe. Munroe was a popular teacher, widely recognized as the foremost authority on the history of Delaware. For many years

he taught most of the students attending the University of Delaware who were required to take a course in Delaware history.

"John A. Munroe was the perfect embodiment of the gentleman scholar," said UD president David P. Roselle. "He was revered as an accomplished historian, a learned professor, a caring mentor, and a delightful friend. He helped shape the history department here at the university, a department now housed in a building that appropriately bears his name. Munroe served as a font of knowledge about the history of both his beloved home state and this university."

A prolific writer and speaker, Munroe published more than 80 professional articles and many more for newspapers, encyclopedias, and magazines, including a regular column on topics of local historical interest appearing in the Wilmington Morning News

from 1959 to 1965. He gave hundreds of talks to both scholarly and community audiences and also presented popular lecture series on Delaware history and government on television, on WDEL-TV and WHYY.

Munroe is survived by his wife, Dorothy; his three children, Stephen Munroe of Shorewood, Wis., Carol Munroe of Cambridge, Mass., and Michael Munroe of Chesterfield, Va.; their spouses; and seven grandchildren.

A remembrance service was held at the Newark Methodist Church, 69 E. Main Street, on Saturday, Sept. 9. A memorial service will be held in the fall at the University of Delaware.

Contributions may be made to the Department of History at the University of Delaware, 236 John Munroe Hall, 46 W. Delaware Avenue, Newark, DE 19716-2547; or to the Historical Society of Delaware, 505 Market Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.