

# Beloved professor passes away at 92

## Past colleagues remember life of historian John Munroe

BY LIVEREN DEZONDO

Staff Writer

Former university history professor John Munroe, who was also the history department chairman for 17 years, died on Sept. 6 at age 92.

Munroe was a prominent figure on campus, having held the positions of alumni secretary and vice-president of Arts and Sciences.

Carol Hoffecker, chairwoman of the

history department from 1973 until 2003, and one of Munroe's undergraduate students, said he became her mentor during his years at the university, steering her toward a career in history.

"He was always very encouraging," Hoffecker said. "I can honestly say that I modeled my career on his. I saw him as my role model."

Munroe served as the editor of *Delaware History Magazine*, the scholarly journal of Delaware history, after his retirement from the university. When he retired from the magazine, Hoffecker took over as editor, a job she still holds today.

"I was fortunate enough to walk behind someone who left such big footsteps," she said.

Munroe contributed to the university in a number of ways, including his participation in the creation of two graduate programs, Hoffecker said.

Munroe Hall, named after the acclaimed historian, is currently home to the anthropology and history departments. Originally a series of three duplexes mainly used for faculty housing, the university renovated and reopened the building in 1997.

Laverne Duggan, history professor, said it is especially rare to name a building after a living person, or someone who has not contributed financially to the building.

"It was decided that it would be an appropriate honor to confer on him," Duggan said. "Nobody had a problem with it because if you are going to name the history building after somebody, certainly John Munroe deserved it."



THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Munroe Hall, renamed in 1997, houses the anthropology and history departments.

Munroe earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the university and later received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania in 1947.

An avid university football fan, Munroe lived in Newark throughout his life, always remaining active on campus, history professor John Best said.

"Since he lived close to the university, he maintained a presence in the department throughout the rest of his life," he said.

Best came to the university in 1969, Munroe's last year as chair of the department.

"He recruited me for this position and I've always been grateful to him for that," he said.

Munroe's broad set of interests, history disposition, generous spirit and love for history will live on in Munroe Hall — in the hearts and minds of the department's students and teachers.

"He was our 'grand old man,'" Best said. "It's really hard to believe that he's gone. He's been with us so long. He was a moral presence, such a good person. We'll miss him very much."



THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

John Munroe served as the history department chairman for 17 years.