

At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on November 18, 2008, the following tribute to the life and service of the late Zeph Stewart was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.

ZEPH STEWART

BORN: January 1, 1921
DIED: December 1, 2007

It is a particular challenge to speak of the life of Zeph Stewart. As the Roman historian Sallust said: "When you write of the outstanding merit and glory of good men, people are quite ready to accept what they could easily do themselves; but anything beyond that is dismissed as an improbable fiction." Zeph was just such a man, one whose life was devoted with consummate effect to the wellbeing of students, staff, colleagues, and anyone else lucky enough to come into his orbit. He was a true humanist, a scholar of broad learning, and a man of deep culture, wit, and compassion. He was guided by a commitment to principles that mattered, and he worked hard at all that he did, generally until 4:00 or 5:00 a.m.

Zeph Stewart, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities, Emeritus, was born on January 1, 1921, in Jackson, Michigan, raised in Cincinnati, and educated at the Hotchkiss School and then Yale, where he graduated with highest honors in Classics in 1942. On the advice of his older brother, Potter, later a Justice of the Supreme Court, he had enrolled in Japanese after the US joined the Second World War. He then joined the Army and served in military intelligence, having been recruited by Edwin Reischauer, with whom he worked closely on Japanese code-breaking in the Pentagon. He also served in London and Paris (1943–47) and was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. After joining the graduate program at Harvard in 1947, he became a Junior Fellow, and in 1953 was appointed Assistant Professor of Greek and Latin, later serving as Master of Lowell House (1963–75), Classics Department Chair (1977–82), Director of the Center for Hellenic Studies (1985–92), and Executive Trustee of the Loeb Classical Library (1973–2004). He was President of the American Philological Association in 1983, and a Financial Trustee from 1994–2001.

Zeph and his beloved wife Diana, *de facto* co-Masters of Lowell House before the title existed, led by example in steering the House community peacefully through the tumultuous Vietnam era. Zeph was the right person for the times, being possessed of an uncanny ability to bring people together, mostly because he always saw the best in others and brought it out in them. Under the Stewarts' leadership, Lowell became the first House

to volunteer for “The Experiment,” a Harvard initiative of the early 1970s to test co-educational housing. This pilot project ultimately led to the full integration of men and women in the College. He was also a pioneer in other ways, with a radical and enlightened outlook, never ostentatiously displayed, that belied what some mistook as conservatism. Nobody in these years gave more in the service of Harvard.

Zeph also served on the first Faculty Council, a body recommended in part in response to those troubles of the late 1960s. He was one of the staunchest advocates of the Comparative Study of Religion, established in 1974, and he played a critical but typically quiet role in shaping Harvard’s program in Afro-American Studies, being appointed to the new Standing Committee on Afro-American Studies in the high-tension spring of 1969, with the remit of bringing to reality the recommendations of the Rosovsky Report. In an atmosphere of contention Zeph’s voice was a stabilizing influence and, thanks to the intensive work of this group through the summer of 1969, the first chair in Afro-American Studies was appointed that fall.

Zeph Stewart was an effective and beloved teacher, in the original Greek and Latin and in translation, both inside and outside the Classics Department. For him, an intermediate Latin class was as important as a graduate seminar, for all students mattered to him—as did janitors, maintenance workers, and kitchen staff. He also kept up close contacts with local Latin teachers, readily visiting their classes and encouraging others to do likewise.

In every administrative position, Zeph believed that it was his job to leave the institution in a stronger position than he had found it. The graduate program in Classics at Harvard, the American Philological Association, and the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. still profit from his stewardship.

Zeph Stewart was an expert on a whole range of Greek and Roman literary figures, on palaeography, ancient philosophy and religion, and on the rise of Christianity. Here too, however, he as often as not deployed his deep knowledge and his expertise to the advantage of others. His best-known publication is the two-volume collection of Arthur Darby Nock’s monumental *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, all meticulously edited and annotated in the service of a great scholar.

The chief scholarly achievement of Zeph’s last 35 years was in first rescuing and then revitalizing the Loeb Classical Library, the world’s largest collection of Greek and Latin literature with accompanying translation. Zeph saved the Library, which was near bankruptcy when he became its trustee in 1973, working closely with two General Editors and with sympathetic figures at the Harvard University Press, and approaching the whole enterprise as an intellectual challenge. Through his own magnetism, he attracted top-flight scholars who were eager to be involved in projects under his direction. Outdated volumes

were replaced and new ones added, and the Loeb Library is now an enduring resource for anyone wishing to gain access to the ancient world.

Even in the last difficult months, when his health was failing, Zeph liked to hear about Harvard, its successes, foibles, and absurdities. And even when he could no longer talk, the shrewd and playful Zeph was still there, still engaged, still amused. He was at his very best with his wife Diana, who was there as his equal in all that they did together, in Lowell House, in Washington, and in their homes in Belmont and, later, in Watertown.

Zeph Stewart died of complications from pneumonia on December 1, 2007, at his home in Watertown, Massachusetts. He is survived by his wife Diana, two daughters, Sarah and Mary, a son, Christopher, and two grandchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Coleman

Diana Eck

Peter Gomes

Richard Thomas, Chair