

## “Gifted, Generous” English Professor Dies

**John C. Riely** was a scholar of 18th-century literature and art

John C. Riely, a retired College of Arts & Sciences associate professor of English, died on January 22, 2011. He was 65.

Riely was born in Philadelphia, Pa., and attended The Episcopal Academy. He earned a BA from Harvard and an MA and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. He served as associate research editor of the Horace Walpole project at Yale University and edited several volumes of Walpole's correspondence, published by Yale University Press. He taught at Yale, as well as at Columbia and the University of Minnesota, before joining the Boston University faculty in 1981.

At BU, Riely taught a wide variety of courses, including the Major Authors survey and the Proseminar in Literature. But he specialized in 18th-century English literature, offering topics such as *The Rise of the Novel*, *Restoration Drama*, and *Johnson and Boswell*, according to William Carroll, a CAS professor of English.

After he retired, in 2003, Riely remained active in the scholarly world, Carroll says, “attending 18th-century conferences and continuing to contribute to the interdisciplinary discussion of the relations between literature and visual art in the period, a field in which he was an early and influential participant.”



**JOHN C. RIELY'S** research and writing contributed to humankind's understanding of literature and art, says his old friend James E. Rooks, Jr. (LAW'74).

*The following appreciation was written by James E. Rooks, Jr. (LAW'74), executive director of the Pound Civil Justice Institute, in Washington, D.C.*

John and I lived miles apart when we were at The Episcopal Academy, and we came from somewhat different backgrounds. But on school days, we were often next-door neighbors. When masters arranged classroom seating according to the alphabet, or called the attendance roll in study hall (“...Richards...Riely...Rooks...Rouse...”), or lined us up in alphabetical order to receive our diplomas, John and I were adjacent to each other. That lasted until they announced grades—at which point we were usually miles apart again!

Our class had many intelligent boys. Whether John was the smartest, I don't know, and it doesn't matter. Suffice it to say that his intellectual horsepower, when combined with a remarkable work ethic for someone of his age, put him at or near the top of our class rankings for his entire career at Episcopal.

Apart from his traditional academic activities, John displayed a major creative streak from an early age. He painted and drew with great technical skill. In Upper School, John became famous among his

peers for his meticulously crafted biology plates and other graphic artwork that he sometimes added to papers he wrote. His creative streak extended to writing and publishing. In 1961, at the end of 10th grade, he won Episcopal's John Andrews Harris Prize for original English composition, with a poem titled “Primeval.”

Given his powerful intellect and prodigious work ethic, I suspect John could have done any number of things, some of them more remunerative than being a college professor. His research and writing contributed to humankind's understanding of literature and art, and the fact that he chose to teach no doubt benefited untold numbers of young people.

John appears to have been well appreciated by his fellow teachers at Boston University. After his death, one colleague wrote in an online guest book, “A gifted, generous, and always helpful colleague.” Another wrote, “John was my office neighbor at BU, and we had many wonderful conversations—sometimes between offices, sometimes over lunch—about our mutual love of the visual arts and relations between art and literature. He made a major contribution not only to his scholarly period, but to this broader concern with the sister arts. His scholarship lives on—a great gift to posterity.”



**EPHRAIM  
FRIEDMAN**

**Ephraim Friedman, 81, former School of Medicine dean, on June 18, 2011.**

FRIEDMAN EARNED A bachelor's in zoology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a medical degree from the University of California School of Medicine. He served as a captain with the U.S. Air

Force from 1956 to 1958.

He completed his residency in ophthalmology at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary and was a research fellow at Harvard Medical School.

In 1965, he became a professor and chair of the MED ophthalmology department and was ophthalmologist in chief at