

of the New Orleans First District Court, records that court officials had stored and forgotten in the attic of the court building at Tulane and Broad over a century earlier. She often was the first to untie these bundles of documents, unattended since the antebellum era. Her first task after a typical day of discovery and delight with these previously unused documents was to scrub the dust of decades past from her hands. As she often remarked, "I'm one of those people who could not leave a rock unturned." The esteem of her colleagues and their appreciation for her contributions to the profession were evident in her election to the presidency of the Louisiana Historical Association and her selection as a fellow of the organization. In 2004 she received the Louisiana Historical Association's Garnie W. McGinty Distinguished Service Award.

Judy Schafer, a New Orleanian to the core, was a loyal friend, a sympathetic adviser, a person of great perception, warmth, charm, and humor, and a remarkably courageous woman. As illness began to intrude into her life and career over recent years, she continued to teach, guide students, and pursue important research, all with a sense of grace that commanded admiration. Her survivors include her husband, Timothy G. Schafer, two children, and three grandchildren. When poor health forced her reluctant retirement in 2014, she reflected philosophically, "I am sorry it has to end, but it has been a good ride." [EDWARD F. HAAS, Wright State University]

Pulitzer Prize-winning scholar, founding member of the National Organization for Women, and Margaret Byrne Professor of American History, Emeritus at Stanford University, Carl N. Degler passed away on December 27, 2014. Serving as president of the American Historical Association (1986), the Organization of American Historians (1979–1980), and the Southern Historical Association (1986), Degler produced a remarkably various, original, and influential body of work that reshaped the history of women and the family, the study of race relations in the Americas, the development of scientific thought, and southern history. As his broad interests and accomplishments reveal, Carl's zest for life knew no match—his ravenous curiosity about ideas, people, and places, his enjoyment of every meal and conversation, the sometimes crazy way he drove his beloved sports car.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on February 6, 1921, Degler took his bachelor's degree from Upsala College in 1942 and served as a meteorologist in the U.S. Army Air Force in India during World War II, before completing his Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1952. Carl joined the faculty at Vassar College in 1952, where his experience teaching talented women students shaped both his commitment to feminism and his interest in women's history. In 1968 Carl moved to Stanford, where he taught until his retirement in 1990 and supervised twenty-three doctoral dissertations.

Carl's first book, *Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America* (New York, 1959), offered a bracingly original survey of American history. Degler's provocative arguments and the book's unabashed presentism—its conviction that history could and must speak to contemporary debates—revealed his approach to history and inspired a generation of students. More than half a century later, *Out of Our Past* remains at once a wise, magisterial

overview of U.S. history and a deeply personal synthesis. The ensuing decades have witnessed the arrival of many competitors, reflecting advances in scholarship, new approaches, subjects, and concerns. But few, if any, have matched the interpretive force, conciseness, and plain old readability of Degler's masterpiece.

Carl's presentism—his commitment to history as a vital intervention in contemporary debate—also fueled his more than half-century encounter with the American South, a fascination that began when the seventeen-year-old Degler wrote away to the National Emergency Council to request a copy of its 1938 *Report on Economic Conditions of the South* (decades later, when I mentioned my interest in this document, he pulled a copy out of his files with his name—then Neumann Degler—and the date scrawled across it). For the young man from New Jersey, the South first appeared as an outlier, an exotic and distasteful region, a stain on the American past. Drawn first to the history of slavery and racism, Carl gradually immersed himself in the region's past, developing not only the critical distance and comparative perspective that underlay his Pulitzer Prize-winning study *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York, 1971), but also a nuanced understanding of the region's persistent distinctiveness and a sympathetic portrait of progressive elements in the white South, in books like *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1974) and *Place Over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness* (Baton Rouge, 1977).

In a June 1994 letter about a recent trip to Germany, Carl described his attempt "to understand the Germans after Hitler." Doing so brought him back to his experience as a southern historian: "The one analogy that makes me think that time and study will make a difference is when I recall my shift in thinking about Southern history. When I became interested in black history, it soon became necessary to become interested in the history of the South, but I approached that region, not unlike the way I approach Germany, that is, to say, a region whose leaders and dominant group—white Southerners—had done and were doing bad things to other people. But as I became more familiar with white Southerners and the white South, and especially as the white South began to change, I could deal with the region, understand it, and relate to its history more in line with the way white liberal Southerners did."

That letter at once illustrates Carl's tireless capacity for growth and learning and his commitment to history as a form of living social criticism and political engagement. Blessed by two fulfilling marriages, first for nearly fifty years to Catherine Grady Degler until her death in 1998, and then to his widow, Therese Baker-Degler, Carl is survived by his and Catherine's two children and their families. A wise mentor, influential scholar, generous colleague, and loyal friend, he will be missed. [BRUCE J. SCHULMAN, Boston University]

Michael O'Brien, historian of the American South and of two centuries of transatlantic intellectual life, died of cancer on May 6, 2015. Combining a deep knowledge of the South's intellectual culture with a broad vision of the region's varied history, he wrote prolifically about the people and institutions that shaped the flow of ideas between Europe and the United States. His dozen books, as notable for the grace and precision of their language as for

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