

Obituaries

DAVID C. EVANS 1940–1999

The fields of East Asian and naval history lost an accomplished scholar and the University of Richmond lost a distinguished teacher and administrator when Professor David Christian Evans succumbed to a six-month struggle with biliary cancer, on June 11, 1999.

Evans graduated from Stanford with a bachelor of arts degree in history in 1961, having been elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1960. After a year of graduate study in history at Princeton, 1961–62, Evans went through the Navy's Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island. Commissioned in the U.S. Naval Reserve, he served for three years at the Navy's Treasure Island base in San Francisco Bay, 1963–66. Having acquired an enthusiastic interest in Japan during those years, he returned to Stanford to pursue a master of arts degree in Japanese language and literature, graduating in 1969. Determined now upon a scholarly career, the next year Evans embarked upon study toward a doctorate at Stanford where he merged his interests in Japanese and naval history in his thesis on the development of the officer corps in the navy of Meiji Japan. It was in these years, 1970–78, that he developed a range of Japanese contacts and sources—scholars, archivists, and veterans of the old imperial navy—who were to be invaluable in the research and writing of the path-breaking work of scholarship most associated with his name.

In 1973, Evans was appointed to the history faculty at the University of Richmond to which he was to devote over a quarter of a century of dedicated, effective, and enthusiastic service, from the time of his appointment as instructor through his full professorship and his appointment as Associate Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, in 1995. He also served as adjunct associate professor of history at the College of William and Mary, 1988 and 1990–91. David Evans was known as a superb classroom teacher across a range of topics in East Asian history and Japanese language and literature, in recognition of which he received his University's Distinguished Educator Award in 1984 and a Sears-Roebuck Foundation Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award in 1991. He also was influential in shaping the core curriculum at Richmond, a difficult task at a time when "the culture wars" tended to polarize faculty. It thus called for all his tact, common sense, and persistence to complete so successfully. As an administrator he was renowned for his fairness, his firmness, and his effectiveness in leading various elements of the faculty to work together.

Evans will be remembered at his university for his advancement of Asian Studies in general and for establishing academic ties with Japan in particular. He was instrumental in establishing Richmond's faculty and student exchange program with Saga University in Japan and was the first exchange professor at Saga in 1994 and he was tireless in his efforts to guide and host visitors from Japan and other parts of Asia.

All these years, Evans, quietly and without fanfare, began building up a reputation as a scholar in Japanese naval history. His first contribution to the field was his editorship, in 1986, of a new edition of Raymond O'Connor's *The Japanese Navy in*

World War II, a widely acclaimed collection of translated recollections and eyewitness accounts of Japanese naval actions in World War II by Japanese officers who were participants in the events they described. Evans not only updated the original 1969 work, but added five new essays, two of which he himself translated.

Already, in 1984, in collaboration with the undersigned, David Evans had begun the enormously complex and path-breaking effort for which he will be honored for years to come: a study of the Imperial Japanese Navy from its modern origins to its entry into World War II. Its purpose was to explain the sources of the navy's early triumphs and of its crushing defeat in World War II. Its perspectives were those of the navy's strategy, its tactics and its technology, or more precisely, the evolving interrelationship of the three. The research for the project involved familiarity with an extensive literature in Japanese, mastery of complex technological issues, and constant consultation with knowledgeable Japanese veterans and scholars. It thus demanded linguistic, archival, and social skills which few other Western scholars have attained.

The result of thirteen years of research, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887–1941* was published in 1997 by the Naval Institute Press. Encyclopedic in its coverage, superbly supplemented with maps, charts, and diagrams, and deftly written, its great contribution has been to illuminate the planning and capabilities of the Japanese side of history's greatest naval war. It has been hailed as a classic by one distinguished American naval historian, and this year was given the 1999 Distinguished Book Award of the Society for Military History. A sequel volume on the rise of Japanese naval aviation was in draft at the time of Evans's death and will be completed by his collaborator.

David Evans was dedicated to excellence in all that he undertook. He strove to attain it by hard work, precision, and care about the task at hand. He demonstrated it in the classroom, he practiced it in the standards he upheld as a university administrator and he maintained it across more than a dozen years of scholarly teamwork with the undersigned, who can testify that rarely did a manuscript page leave his hand without being the better for it.

Evans is survived by his wife Carolyn and by three sons, Andrew, Peter, and Daniel. He will be remembered by them, by his colleagues, and by this writer as a shining emblem of kindness, courtesy, integrity, and professionalism.

MARK R. PEATTIE
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A. THOMAS KIRSCH 1930–1999

Anthony Thomas Kirsch, Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies at Cornell University, died in Ithaca, New York on May 17th, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. A generous colleague and wise teacher, Tom was a gifted thinker whose rich ideas and clear questions shaped today's understanding of Southeast Asia.

Born in Syracuse, New York into a large extended family, Tom was educated at Christian Brothers Academy, Syracuse. After earning a bachelors (1952) and masters (1959) at the University of Syracuse and serving in the U.S. Army (1953–55), he