

Memorial Minute for Raymond Ducharme
Read by Al Rudnitsky at the November 16, 2016 Faculty Meeting

Raymond Ducharme, Jr., began his thirty-one year career in the Department of Education and Child Study in 1969. He retired in 2001. Although Ray enjoyed a long life, his sudden and unexpected death came as a shock to his family and friends.

Born in Massachusetts, growing up in New Hampshire and Maine, Ray was a New Englander through and through. The time he spent in New York did not diminish his enthusiasm for maple syrup, baked beans, lobster, the Maine coast, the Kennedy's, and the Red Sox. He graduated from Waterville High School, received his B.A. from Colby College in 1953 and went on to serve two years in the army – accumulating far more than two years worth of hilarious stories. He returned to civilian life earning a master's degree at Teachers College, Columbia University.

A high school social studies teacher for seven years, Ray, who knew he loved history, now found he loved teaching. All reports indicate that Ray was one of those high school teachers who shaped people's lives. Up to the time of his retirement – and undoubtedly beyond – Ray received regular visits and correspondence from his former high school students. This was more than equally true of the students he taught at Smith. There was no doubt Ray's core identity was a teacher. He once told me he could tell whether the person who taught before him in a Smith classroom had had K-12 teaching experience. If she or he did, the blackboard would be erased.

Ray began working on his doctorate at Teacher's College, completing it in 1966. Recognizing the kind of teacher and now scholar he was, Teacher's College offered him a position as Assistant Professor and three years later promoted him to Associate Professor.

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Ray was lured to Smith College in 1969 by Larry Fink, who had firsthand knowledge of Ray's ability as a teacher of social studies and a teacher of teachers. Ray's early scholarship examined the outsized influence of the historian Charles Beard on social studies education in the United States. This work led to a highly regarded book, *Beard and the Social Studies*. Ray's scholarly work turned toward social studies education and educators. He produced a wide variety of resources aimed at improving the teaching of social studies and the preparation of social studies teachers. Long before its current prominence, Ray became deeply interested in the special circumstances and challenges of urban education; co-authoring with Larry Fink, *The Crisis in Urban Education*, a well-respected book

A fully engaged member of the faculty and Smith community, Ray served on college committees and as department chair. He was president of Smith's AAUP chapter and a strong voice for the faculty during a time of transition in faculty governance at Smith. More recently, Ray was instrumental in fostering regular gatherings – intellectual and social – of the emeriti faculty.

In 1984, Jill Conway asked Ray to assume the directorship of the Smith College Campus School at a moment when the future of the school was in doubt. Ray led the school through this challenging period and remained as Director for twelve years. The role required all his qualities of character and his considerable talent with people. He was fair-minded, a good listener, there to support and build people up, and there to challenge people to reach higher. The Campus School – to this day – in character, faculty, and physical plant carry the influence of his stewardship.

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Ray's intellectual interests were wide ranging. He was a voracious reader of history as well as the novels of John Le Carre. For a New Englander, he had a considerable soft spot for things British. His versatility was legendary – illustrative was his trading in a vintage Cadillac convertible for a Volkswagen Rabbit diesel. I understand his students referred to him as the Marlboro Man – not because of his bad habits but rather his physical resemblance. What his colleagues and his students will remember best and most are his kindness, generosity with his time, high standards, wry sense of humor, and genuine concern for the lives of others. He is missed.