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Lawrence University

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Posted on: **August 1st, 2013** *by* **Rick Peterson**

Professor Emeritus of English Ben Ross Schneider Jr., who spent 28 years on the Lawrence University faculty, died peacefully July 24 in Brookline, Mass. He was 93 years old.

Professor Emeritus of English Ben Schneider

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Schneider joined the faculty in 1955 and taught until his retirement in 1983. He was recognized with an honorary Master of Arts degree by Lawrence at the college's 1983 commencement.

A dedicated teacher, researcher and writer, Schneider was a pioneer in the use of computers for research in the humanities. He placed great value on the Socratic Method in teaching, the philosophy of the ancient Greek and Roman Stoics and a straightforward reading of Shakespeare's plays based on these classical moral principles. These principles guided not only his teaching and research but his own life as well.

In the 1970s, he computerized an 11-volume reference work entitled "The London Stage, 1660-1800" with the help of 18 student assistants and two programmers. After nine dedicated years, he produced a general index to the 500,000 references to names and titles it contained. The project resulted in the well-received book "Travels in Computerland." A reviewer for *Computing Newsletter* hailed Schneider as "the Saul Bellow of computerland." He also authored the book "My Personal Computer and Other Family Crises."

Shortly before he died, Schneider held the page proofs for his latest book, "Shakespeare's Morals," forthcoming next year from Edwin Mellen Press. A website he created, www.stoics.com, will be maintained as a resource for future researchers.

He attended high school in Winchester, Mass., and graduated from Williams College in 1942. During World War II, he served in the Pacific theater with the U.S. Army Signal Corps. After the war, did post-graduate work on William Wordsworth at Cambridge University in England and Columbia University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1955.

He began his teaching career as an instructor in English literature at the University of Cincinnati and later taught at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Oregon State before joining the Lawrence faculty.

Schneider was an avid skier, sailor, woodworker, tinkerer and world traveler, interests and skills he generously passed on to his children.

He was preceded in death by his wife Mackay McCord Schneider and daughter Mackay Taylor Tanner. He is survived by daughter Devon Knight of Vancouver, B.C., sons Ben R. Schneider III of Brookline, Mass., and Nick Schneider of Lyons, Colo.,

grandchildren Anders Schneider and Amelia Thelen, Nathan and Emily Schneider, and Catherine Tanner.

No services are planned. In lieu of flowers, the family has asked to consider making a donation in his honor to National Public Radio, Friends of Big Island Pond, Lawrence University (please specify the Seeley G. Mudd Library) or the Mayo Clinic.