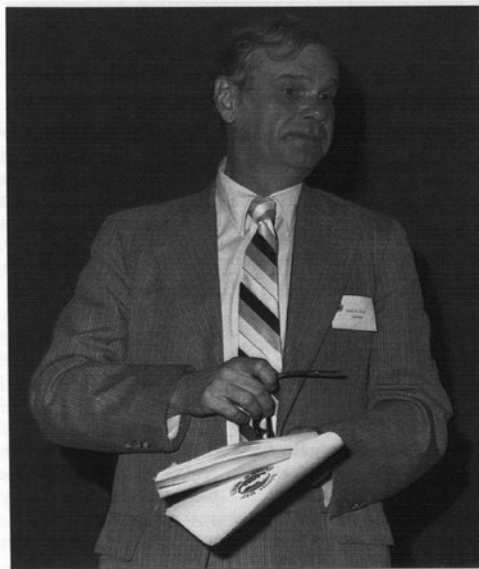


DONALD R. MCCOY, 1928–1996 IN MEMORIAM



Donald R. McCoy, University Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Kansas, died in Lawrence on November 12, 1996. A former president of the Kansas State Historical Society (1981–1982), he served for many years on the Society's board of directors and also was a member of the editorial advisory board of *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*. Professor McCoy joined the faculty at Kansas in 1957, where he served briefly as director of extension service while teaching a course in the history department. He soon joined the history faculty full-time and for the remainder of his career taught courses in twentieth-century United States history. He retired in the spring of 1995.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, on January 18, 1928, McCoy entered the United States Army signal corps in the closing days of World War II. He returned to civilian life in 1947 and attended the University of Denver, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1949. Later that year he received an M.A. from the University of Chicago. He then enrolled in the doctoral program at American University, Washington, D.C., and worked as an archivist with Department of Interior records at the National Archives. Before finishing his doctorate in 1954, he joined the faculty at the State University of New York College at Cortland, 1952–1957.

McCoy was a prolific scholar interested primarily in political history and in the institution of the presidency. He eschewed theoretical explanation of history, emphasizing instead the importance of tradition, common sense, practicality, and expediency in explaining America's political past. In addition to numerous articles in scholarly journals and major historical dictionaries, McCoy published seven books and edited four other book-length works. His monographs include: *Angry Voices: Left-of-Center Politics in the New Deal Era* (1958); *Landon of Kansas* (1966); *Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President* (1967); *Coming of Age: The Unit-*

ed States during the 1920s and 1930s (1973); *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (1973); *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934–1968* (1978); and *The Presidency of Harry S. Truman* (1984).

As a result of these studies, McCoy was recognized as a leading authority of mid-twentieth-century United States history, and he earned many awards. His Coolidge biography was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and he was the recipient of the Byron Caldwell

Smith award for distinguished writing in 1970. McCoy's book on the National Archives earned him the Waldo Gifford Leland prize of the Society of American Archivists, and he was made a fellow of that society. He held several research grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, was a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of Bonn, Germany, in 1962, and served as Mary Ball Washington Professor of History at University College, Dublin, Ireland, 1976–1977.

Throughout his professional career, McCoy remained interested in archival affairs, serving on various advisory committees of the National Archives and the Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower presidential libraries. He was instrumental in creating the University Archives and the master's degree program in historical administration and museum studies at KU. As a teacher, he was a superb lecturer who presented well-organized classes to undergraduates, but he will be remembered most for his excellence in directing the studies of graduate students. McCoy was a brilliant and demanding mentor, but he leavened his critiques with humane understanding. He knew that in reaching the minds of students, the teacher reaches toward eternity.

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