

OBITUARY / DÉCÈS

J'apprenais hier avec tristesse le décès le 18 mai 2003 à l'âge de 59 ans de **René Jetté**, généalogiste et démographe, auteur du *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec des origines à 1730* (Montréal, de l'Université de Montréal, 1983), d'un *Traité de généalogie* (Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1991) et d'une foule d'autres publications. René avait été professeur au CEGEP de Saint-Hyacinthe et avait collaboré au Programme de recherche en démographie historique de l'Université de Montréal, de même qu'à l'Institut interuniversitaire de recherches sur les populations (IREP) sous la direction de Gérard Bouchard. C'est dans ce cadre que j'avais fait sa connaissance. René a été un collaborateur d'une grande gentillesse et même temps que e'une rigueur scientifique exemplaire. Le monde de la généalogie canadienne-française a perdu l'un de ses grands artisans.

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Robin W. Winks (1930-2003). Canada, alone, was never a large enough subject to absorb all of Robin Winks' capacious historical imagination: he wrote about Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the United States, the British Empire, the environment, detective stories and academic spies. Winks spent almost his entire teaching career at Yale University where he held the Randolph W. Townsend, Jr. Chair in History. He died on April 7, 2003, and is survived by his wife, Avril, a daughter Honor, a son Eliot and two grandchildren. Born in Indiana on December 5, 1930 into a Christian Science family, the first book he read by a Canadian was E.E. Sheppard's "mind cure" meditations, *The Thinking Universe* (1915). It didn't convert him. He gained his first degree from the University of Colorado in 1952, earned an M.A. in Maori studies at Victoria University in New Zealand, a second M.A. in ethnography at Colorado, and a John Hopkins Ph.D. in 1957. If Winks' first book, *Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins 1960), fitted into a well-worn groove, his second *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), struck out in a fresh direction. Like his first, this work was widely admired by historians for its scholarship, but members of the Canadian Black community, many of whom Robin came to know through his friend the novelist, Austin Clarke, also warmly welcomed it. Throughout his career, Canadian history obviously remained relevant to him. In his undergraduate courses on the British Empire, Canada was always central. He worked closely with graduate students from Canada and elsewhere whose research touched on Canada's past - the most notable, perhaps, being Joy Parr whose study of the Barnardo childre, *Labouring Children*, began as a doctoral thesis that Winks supervised "with astuteness and good cheer." Finally, he developed Canadian studies at Yale by raising funds to establish the Bicentennial Chair of Canadian Studies. (Gerald Friesen, the

current CHA president, will hold the chair in the fall of 2003). Winks' energy, like his list of publications, was prodigious. He chaired the Yale Department of History (1996-99) and, with his New Zealand-born wife, reigned in high style as Master of Berkeley College (1977-81). For two years (1969-71) he served as cultural attaché to the U.S. Embassy in London; he chaired the National Parks System Advisory Board and visited every national park in the United States and most of the Canadian parks that, he feared, had recently fallen into neglect.

The honours Winks received were numerous, including the George Eastman Chair and the Harmsworth Professorship at Oxford, and two Pulitzer Prize nominations. He won the Donner medal of the U.S. Canadian Studies Association and the Governor-General's Award for Canadian Studies presented by the International Association for Canadian Studies. Of his extra-curricular activities, none commanded more of his passion and intellect than conservation. In 1988 the U.S. Department of the Interior named him Conservationist of the Year and in 1999 the National Parks Conservation Association awarded him its first gold medal. At the Memorial Service held at Yale on May 9, attended by some 600 friends, students, colleagues and admirers, the National Park Service provided an honour guard. The National Parks Conservation Association and Berkeley College at Yale have both established funds in his memory.

No American scholar made a more significant contribution to the study of Canada in the United States than Robin W. Winks.

*Ramsay Cook, Dictionary of Canadian Biography/
Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*