

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Robert H. Ferrell
(1921-2018)

Prof. Robert H. Ferrell passed away August 8, 2018 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was cared for by his daughter Carolyn and her family. He authored over 60 books, including *American Diplomacy: A History*, a standard text for college classes on foreign relations during the 1960s and '70s. Despite near blindness from macular degeneration, he published more after retirement than during his teaching years. In his nineties, he assured friends he would slow down, but he was prone to backsliding. His latest monograph, *Unjustly Dishonored: An African American Division in World War I*, came out in 2011, shortly after *Inside the Nixon Administration* (2010) and a biography of Grace Coolidge (2008).

Ferrell was born on May 8, 1921, in Cleveland. In the fall of 1939, he started his undergraduate education at Bowling Green State University, majoring in education with a concentration in primary school music. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, however, Ferrell enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942 out of a sense of duty. He returned to complete his bachelor's in music education at Bowling Green in 1945. A year later, he earned a second bachelor's degree, in history. Ferrell went on to receive his master's degree in 1948 and proceeded for a Ph.D. under the guidance of Pulitzer Prize-winning professor Samuel Flagg Bemis.

After a year at Michigan State University, Ferrell joined the faculty at IU in 1953 and taught here for thirty-five years. He mentored several generations of graduate and undergraduate students who remember his Ballantine office stacked to the ceiling with books, part of a personal collection so large he bought a house near Bryan Park to store it. Ferrell's students learned his iron laws of writing: Short sentences are best. Never begin a paragraph with a date. Do not "stack" nouns. Two direct objects might slip past his red pen but three were an offense.

His care for his students went beyond the classroom. Tapping his many contacts in government, he placed students in jobs. When one complained of noise in the dormitories that made it hard to study, he went out for a nighttime reconnaissance and circulated a report demanding action from the administration.

The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, of which he was a founder, awards an annual book prize in his honor. He will long be remembered and missed by his many students, readers, and colleagues (even though this sentence is one he would never have allowed).

We request that this memorial tribute to Robert Ferrell be presented to the members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that it be preserved in its minutes and archive, and that after its presentation a copy be sent to his daughter Carolyn Ferrell.

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