



Stephen Tonsor

Chelsea | Wednesday, January 8 2014

Stephen J. Tonsor III, of Chelsea, formerly of Ann Arbor, Michigan, age 90, passed away on Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at the Chelsea Retirement Community, Towsley Village. He was born on November 26, 1923, in English Township, Illinois, the son of Stephen J. Tonsor II, and Rose Mary (Schmidt). He was a professor of history at the University of Michigan for 30 years, retiring in 1984, and a veteran of the United States Army. He served in the Signal Corps in the Pacific in World War II, and was honorably discharged in January 1946 as a Staff Sergeant.

Stephen started his college education at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, a Presbyterian work-study college. After his second year, he was drafted into the United States Army. He completed his undergraduate degree on the GI Bill at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana in 1948, and received his PhD in history from the University of Illinois in 1955. He studied abroad at the University of Zurich and as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Munich, and received his position at the University of Michigan as a Professor of History, by letter, while in Germany. While a graduate student at the University of Illinois, he and his wife worked for three summers as fire look-outs on Ruffneck Peak in the Sawtooth Mountains. He loved traveling and spending time outdoors, especially hiking and mountain-climbing, and he was passionate about gardening. A member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Detroit, he enjoyed attending their German-language mass.

In addition to his work as a scholar, he was well known in the broader community outside the University. In scores of articles and reviews, he addressed both academic and nonacademic audiences. The numerous themes he treated--youth and education, the meaning of equality, religion, historiography, culture, and others--resonated widely and brought Professor Tonsor broad recognition. The Distinguished Teacher Award he received in 1962 attests to his devotion to teaching at all levels, from undergraduate introductory surveys to upper-level and graduate courses. Professor Tonsor guided many graduate students in their pursuit of graduate degrees in European intellectual and

cultural history of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His generous hospitality was warmly remembered by many former students. In 1972-73, he was the senior visiting research fellow at the Hoover Institution, in 1969-72 he was consultant to the President's Council of Economic Advisers, and for many years he had been closely associated with the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Since 1970, he had been associate editor of *Modern Age*. From 1969-71, he was Secretary to the Reim and Earhart Foundations. His distinguished service to the University of Michigan was recognized in 1996 when he was named professor emeritus of history.

On September 6, 1949, he married Caroline Maddox, and she survives. Also surviving are four children: Ann (Timothy) Zeddies of Grand Rapids, Stephen J. Tonsor IV (Susan Kalisz) of Pittsburgh, Claire (Kent) Pruss of Saline, and Margaret (Scott) Rayburn of Florida; ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; three brothers: Edward (Maxine) Tonsor of Medora, IL, Bernard (Bernadine) Tonsor of Jerseyville, IL, and Gerald (Pauline) Tonsor of Peoria, IL; two sisters, Mary Jean (Jerry) Jarvis of Jacksonville, IL, and Kathryn Warden of Pittsfield, IL; a sister-in-law, Betty Tonsor of North Carolina; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Patrick.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m., Thursday, June 26, 2014 at the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fieldon, with Father William Hembrow serving a celebrant.

Interment of his ashes will immediately follow at the St. Mary's Cemetery in Fieldon.

Memorials may be given to the United Methodist Retirement Communities Heritage Foundation or to the Stephen J. Tonsor Best Oral Presentation of Thesis Award at the Department of History, University of Michigan.

Crawford Funeral Home in Jerseyville is in charge of the arrangements.