

OHIO HISTORY

Volume 111/Summer-Autumn 2002

© 2002 Ohio Historical Society

In Memoriam

FRANK L. BYRNE: A GIFTED CIVIL WAR HISTORIAN

By *Leonne M. Hudson*

Frank L. Byrne was born on May 12, 1928, in Hackensack, New Jersey. At the time of his death on April 21, 2002, he was Professor Emeritus of History at Kent State University. After graduating from Trenton State College in 1950, he attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison where he received his M.A. (1951) and Ph.D. (1957) degrees in history under the direction of William B. Hesseltine. He served two years in the U.S. Army prior to beginning his career in teaching. Dr. Byrne held faculty positions at Louisiana State University (1957–1958) and Creighton University (1958–1966) before arriving at Kent State in 1966, where he spent twenty-nine years, retiring in 1995.

Byrne's publication record includes authoring four books, more than fifty articles, book chapters, and significant encyclopedia essays. He also penned numerous book reviews of which eleven have appeared in *Ohio History*. Since 1987, he had been Project Director of the Robert A. Taft Papers (The Kent State University Press), and in 1994 assumed the editorship of a series of Civil War memoirs for the University of Tennessee Press. He served one term on the Executive Council of the Southern Historical Association of which he was a life member. Frank, accompanied by his wife Marilyn, was honored with a fifty-year certificate as a member of the Organization of American Historians at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on April 12.

He was an active supporter of the programs and activities of the Ohio Academy of History, the Ohio Historical Society, and the Western Reserve Historical Society. He served on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Ohio History* and the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Society for Military History. During his years at Kent State, he directed twenty-one master's theses and nineteen doctoral dissertations, one of which was mine. Byrne directed several theses and dissertations on Ohio subjects including the state's role in the Civil War. He was extremely delighted that two of his doctoral

students received the prestigious Dissertation Award given annually by the Ohio Academy of History.

A gifted teacher, his passion and enthusiasm for his work were inspiring. Graduate students' admiration of Professor Byrne as a scholar and instructor was genuine. One of them recalled that he was committed "to training his students to achieve the highest levels of academic performance." Doubtless, he had a positive influence on many undergraduate and graduate students during his fine career as a historian. I will always appreciate and remember him as a valued mentor.

In addition to his wife, Byrne leaves to cherish his memory two children, Anne Boyles (Todd) and Frank (Mary), three grandsons, two sisters, many nieces and nephews, and numerous friends and colleagues.

Leonne M. Hudson is Associate Professor, Department of History, Kent State University.