

SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Office of the President

SHEAR Distinguished Service Award

for

Ralph D. Gray

Ralph D. Gray earned his BA at Hanover College in southern Indiana. He picked up a masters at Delaware and a doctorate at the University of Illinois. He began teaching history at the Ohio State University, moved on to Indiana University-Kokomo, and finally settled at Indiana University-Indianapolis (a branch facility shared with Purdue and inelegantly known as IUPUI).

Ralph probably is best known for his first book on the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, but he produced eight more volumes before he retired (and five more since!), including an excellent two-volume reader on Indiana history, a book portraying Indiana's national political candidates, and several excellent studies of local economic developments from the Hoosier heartland.

In 1980, Jim Broussard put out a Request for Proposals to launch a new journal sponsored by the infant Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. The proposed *JER* was meant to fit between the well-established *William & Mary Quarterly* and *Civil War History*. Prodded by his department chairman, Bernie Friedman, Ralph threw himself into the breach, and the first number of *JER* came out under his guidance the following spring. Ralph ran the show out of his corner office in Cavanaugh Hall until 1994, when his faithful assistant, Michael A. Morrison, dragged it 60 miles up the interstate to West Lafayette.

Ralph adopted the most exacting standards then practiced in academic publishing—including fact checks, footnote checks, double-blind review, painstaking copy-editing, and multiple page proofs—all of which took an astonishing amount of time. It also produced a very high quality product without which SHEAR would not have grown into the institution represented here tonight.

For his spirit of adventure, dead-on instincts, for correcting Bradford's spelling, for honesty, wisdom, commitment to quality, and unflagging sense of fair play, we hereby recognize Ralph D. Gray, founding editor of the *Journal of the Early Republic*, with the SHEAR Distinguished Service Award.



John Lauritz Larson, President

July 19, 2014