

Gary Land Legacy

Brian Strayer & John Nay
Andrews University

Dr. Gary G. Land, emeritus professor of history at Andrews University died on Saturday, April 26, at the St. Joseph Medical Center in Mishawaka, Indiana, after a long battle with cancer. Services were held on Friday, May 2, 2014.

Two tributes to Dr. Land are being posted on this site. The first one was prepared by Brian Strayer, Gary's colleague, and John Nay, one of his students. It is based on the Life Sketch given at the funeral service.

Gary Gene Land August 22, 1944-April 26, 2014

Gary Gene Booth was born in San Francisco on August 22, 1944 to Elliott Booth, a longshoreman and Navy veteran, and Virginia May (Bradley) Booth, a nurse. After the couple divorced, Gary lived briefly with his father and stepmother until they too separated. Then for a short time he lived with his Aunt Bernice and Uncle Bo. By age 3 he had been sent to live with his mother's sister, Barbara Pennington, and her husband who lived in Riverside, California. But when they decided to place him in an orphanage, his Uncle Bob Bradley and Aunt Audrey, Seventh-day Adventists of Napa, adopted him and sent him to kindergarten as Gary Bradley. Within a couple of years, however, as their family grew, they sent Gary to live with Audrey's father and stepmother, Aubrey and Thelma (Gillespie) Land, Seventh-day Adventists who lived nearby. When their marriage ended a few years later, Gary stayed with Thelma, becoming Gary Land.

Gary attended school at Napa Junior Academy and in 1962 graduated from Monterey Bay Academy. From 1962 to 1966 he attended Pacific Union College where Dr. Walter Utt inspired in him a love of history. In 1966 he received his B.A. in History at PUC. He then attended the University of California at Santa Barbara where he earned an M.A. in History in 1967 and a Ph.D. in History in 1973, specializing in American intellectual and cultural history.

In 1970, he joined the History and Political Science Department at Andrews University where he would teach two generations of students over the next 40 years, 22 of them as Chair of the Department. On August 19, 1973, Gary married Edith Marie Stone, and together they had two children: Jeffery Alexander, born October 14, 1978, and Jessamyn Elizabeth, born March 1, 1981.

During his academic career, Dr. Land was a prolific scholar, authoring eight books and contributing to 137 other books and publications on Adventist, American, and baseball history. His articles appeared in the Journal of Adventist Education, College and University Dialogue, Spectrum, Adventist Heritage, The American Historical Review, among many others.

He also served as a graduate programs director and assistant dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. Andrews University bestowed on him its prestigious J. N. Andrews Award and the Researcher of the Year Award for his outstanding contributions to the University. Active in community service, Gary was a member of the Berrien County Historical Association's Board of Directors; a children's Sabbath school director and teacher at Pioneer Memorial Church; a member of the Spectrum editorial board; and served on the organizing committee for the Ellen White Project.

Gary retired in 2010 as Emeritus Professor of History and spent the next four years battling intestinal cancer with chemotherapy, radiation, and acupuncture. During 2013-14, he had the satisfaction of completing his last three books: a biography of Uriah Smith (forthcoming with the Review and Herald Publishing Association), a greatly expanded second edition of his Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists, and the coedited Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet (with Oxford University Press).

Gary passed to his rest at the St. Joseph Medical Center in Mishawaka, Indiana, on Sabbath afternoon, April 26, 2014, surrounded by his wife Edi, his daughter Jessamyn, and his daughter-in-law Cassandra Land. He will always be remembered as one who held a deep love of baseball, music, books, stamp collecting, model building, and thought-provoking conversations with good friends.

*Brian E. Strayer & John R. Nay
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Gary Land's first student, Ben McArthur, penned this tribute. It was originally published on the Spectrum website.

See <http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/04/30/remembering-gary-land>

When Gary Land died this past Sabbath, we lost a person who stood at the center of the Adventist historical community for over 40 years. His contributions went well beyond the many books he wrote or edited and beyond his influence as teacher and department chair at Andrews. He served the church as a Christian intellectual, and in the New York Review of Books sense of that term, was perhaps the first in Adventist higher education. If I exaggerate, it's only slightly. Let me explain.

Gary was a graduate of Monterey Bay Academy and Pacific Union College. From college he went directly to University of California/Santa Barbara, where he studied American intellectual history with Robert

Kelley (and worked for Otis Graham). When Ronald Numbers left Andrews for Loma Linda in 1970, Gary received the call to Berrien Springs. He would spend his entire career at Andrews, retiring in 2010.

I was there at his beginning. Having survived the gauntlet of Don McAdams's World Civ class as a freshman, I found myself the next year in Gary's American History sequence. I saw a lanky and already balding figure enter the classroom. Soft-spoken and easily embarrassed, he was the model of diffidence. It was an endearing quality. Gary's humility and willingness to question his own ideas became his professional persona.

None of that mattered to me then. What I encountered was an approach to history I didn't know existed: the history of ideas, styles, and sensibilities. It was exhilarating. Without benefit of Powerpoint (or any visual aid other than chalk and blackboard), Gary elucidated the concepts that shaped America. I soon determined that this was the game for me. Over the next two years I took whatever courses he offered. In the process, Gary assigned books of a complexity not often seen in our current classrooms: works by Edmund Morgan, Bernard Bailyn, Richard Hofstadter, and Perry Miller — all giants in the field in the 1970s. I took advantage of his good nature (and the fact that he was still a bachelor) to occasionally drop by his apartment, where he would talk literature. When he recommended John Dos Passos or William Styron, I dutifully found copies.

It was Gary's engagement with not only history but also literature and religious thought that gave him a special place in Adventist academia. Andrews University in the 1970s housed an unusual number of accomplished faculty (the Seminary purge notwithstanding). Gary stood apart for his knowledge of the Western intellectual tradition and particularly the currents of American thought. He seemed always the best-read person in any gathering. Further, he consciously sought to infuse this vein of intellectual seriousness into Adventist discourse. I think of one example. His book *Teaching History: A Seventh-day Adventist Approach*, was both a conceptually sophisticated and a practical treatment of the subject....

At this sad time, we can be grateful that Gary had the satisfaction of seeing one of his most significant works, *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* (which he co-edited with Terrie Aamodt and Ron Numbers), fresh off the press. (The book is being released by Oxford University Press May 2014.) And though he will not see the final product, he was able to complete his biography of Uriah Smith. Predictably, he already had set to work on a new project.

To end where I began, Gary Land occupied a singular place in the Adventist academy. He often devoted his time to championing the projects of others (as in making sure that Everett Dick's groundbreaking 1930 dissertation on the Millerites finally found publication in 1994). Such efforts were in the service of his driving vision: a church, a Christianity informed by historical reflection. Gary was part of that special generational cohort which nudged our denomination toward intellectual self-scrutiny. Although the church has wavered in its commitment to this uncomfortable endeavor, Gary marched straight ahead, to the end persuaded that only the examined religious tradition was worth embracing.

*Ben McArthur graduated from Andrews University in 1973.
He teaches history at Southern Adventist University.*