In Memoriam: Boyd H. Hill, Jr.
In Memoriam

Boyd H. Hill, Jr.

Professor Boyd Howard Hill, Jr., died at the age of 87 on July 2nd, 2018, at his home in Longmont, Colorado. Boyd was a medieval historian at the University of Colorado at Boulder from 1964-2001. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and published important articles and books on pre-modern anatomy, physiology, comparative history, diplomatics, and Ottonian Germany. He was also the general editor of a text for courses in western civilization. On a personal note for the authors of this article, Boyd was an influential mentor, guiding us first through seminars and classwork through the rigors of graduate school training, but always with knowledge and good humor. We survivors-cum-graduates of his training in the medieval history doctoral program at CU Boulder will always fondly remember the sterling quality that informed not only Boyd’s lectures and seminars, but especially the expectations and training of his advisees.

Ginger observed: “Boyd was one of the founders of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association (RMMRA), and he and Harry Rosenberg, another of our founders, had a hand in the origin and direction of the RMMRA and in me as a scholar. When I received my MA at Colorado State University, Harry and Boyd put their heads together to create a path for me at CU Boulder. With his gruff laugh, feisty personality, and great erudition, Boyd shepherded me through my Ph.D. coursework and the beginning of my dissertation work when failing eyesight finally forced him into retirement. Boyd was a demanding teacher, and he not only directed my interest in medieval medicine with a laser focus, but he also created opportunities for me to learn and teach, and he molded me as a medievalist. Boyd’s research on the Fünfbilderserie has continued to inform my own to this day and his writing on the subject continues
to be relevant and important to the field. And, of course, I remember his lessons, including the importance of archival research and the value of working with manuscripts. Although I eventually finished my degree with another professor, it was Boyd who hooded me at my graduation. I corresponded with Boyd by letter once in a while after we parted ways, including most recently in February when I contacted him as a Past President of the RMMRA about the 50th Anniversary program at this year’s conference. While he was not able to come because of his health, he did offer good wishes for the future of the association and, particularly, warmly offered his own congratulations on my presidency. I was sorry to not be able to visit with him one more time, but it was nice to make that connection and his warm wishes were especially heart-warming. Boyd was a first-rate scholar, a caring mentor, an important founder and leader of the RMMRA and a good man. He will be missed.”

Todd had this to add: “I’ll always fondly remember Boyd. Indeed, I was the too-often-fortunate recipient of his teaching style, which fell somewhere between that of Professor Charles Kingsfield in The Paper Chase and a military drill sergeant, but his relentless demand of excellence from those wishing to become medieval historians meant that no student could graduate without a comprehensive knowledge of history, proficiency in languages essential for medieval historians (Latin, French and German), respect for the rules of evidence, expertise in paleography, accurate documentation, and above all, clear writing. One of the best training moments I ever had occurred in front of a full class of undergrads in a general medieval history survey. I was Boyd’s advisee, and among his requirements was that his advisees were to audit and fully master the course texts and material he presented in his undergraduate courses in medieval history. During that term, I was also serving as a graduate teaching assistant for another professor and I had brought a stack of tests with me to catch up on grading while Boyd was lecturing, a practice verboten by him. Thinking I was safe in the back of the class behind a host of freshman and sophomores, I was happily flying through my grading when,
mortified, I realized he was saying my name: ‘. . . and Mr. Upton, as we begin talking about Saint Augustine, where is Hippo Regius?’ Relieved, I said ‘North Africa,’ and held onto the hope that he hadn’t noticed me grading. I knew the jig was up when he continued, ‘Yes, now please show the class where that is on the map.’ Face flaming because I had absolutely no idea where Hippo Regius actually was, I walked to the front of the class and started with shaking finger at Alexandria, Egypt and—with Boyd’s voice prompting, ‘No, that’s not it. A little farther, a little farther . . . — kept heading westward along the darn North African coast until I finally reached the area of modern-day Libya. As I walked back to my seat drenched in sweat, he thanked me and told the undergrads that, first, one must always have not only textbook knowledge of the places they studied, but actually be able to geographically know sources, and, secondly, that perhaps in the future ‘Mr. Upton will grade his blue-books on his own time, not mine.’ I still grin at the fact I survived his training, and he was so comprehensively excellent an historian that I’ve striven to live up to his example in my own career, both in publications and teaching—my own undergraduate students at MSU Denver groan at the geography portion of their quizzes in my world history and medieval world classes, but Boyd was absolutely correct to make this demand! After he retired, having him return to CU Boulder and be by my side in 2007 to hood me on the stage in Mary Rippon Theater will always remain one of the highlights of my life. I am deeply grateful for his training, his scholarship, his urging me to join the RMMRA, and, ultimately, the trust he placed in me to participate in what Marc Bloch called ‘the historian’s craft.’ He will be missed. Requiescat in pace.”

A brief review of his career and publications will offer our RMMRA members and readers of this volume of Quidditas some insights into a historian whose light will be missed.
Besides being a founder of the RMMRA at its inception in 1968, in the course of his long involvement in the RMMRA, he filled nearly every role possible: presenter, conference host, officer, board member, program chair, keynoter, invited speaker, and reader for our journal. The RMMRA is deeply indebted to his thirty years of scholarship and service to the society. Hill’s involvement in our organization became particularly pronounced in the early 1980s, when he served as a member of the Executive Committee (1979-1982), represented the RMMRA from 1979-1985 at the Medieval Academy’s Committee on Centers and Regional Associations (CARA), and then elected President of the RMMRA in 1983. That involvement with our association continued throughout the remainder of the decade and into the next, when he was the keynote speaker at the Plenary Session of RMMRA at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, in April 1988. In the early nineties he served as a history session chair at the 1991 Breckenridge meeting, and presented a paper at the 1994 RMMRA meeting in Jackson, Wyoming, “Queen Gerberga and the Turn of the Millennium.” The following year, he again attended our conference and as a courtesy read a paper at our 1995 Logan, Utah meeting for a CU Boulder colleague, Dr. Steven Epstein, who was unable to present. At the 1996 RMMRA meeting in Park City, Utah, Hill continued his work with Carolingian and Ottonian documents by presenting “Queen Gerberga as Intervenient: Diplomatics at the Late Carolingian Court.” And, finally, shortly before his retirement, our association welcomed Hill as the invited speaker at 1998 Big Sky, Montana, where he delivered a paper, “Thirty Years Ago.” He also gave time to our journal when he served as an outside reader for papers and manuscripts submitted to our journal in the 1980s and 1990s—when it was known as the Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association—and chaired sessions at a variety of RMMRA meetings that reflected his interests (“Latin Letters and Paleography,” RMMRA Flagstaff, AZ, April, 1979; and “Spiritual Education and the Monastic Tradition,” RMMRA Greeley, CO. April, 1980).
PUBLICATIONS & INTERESTS

For the first decade of his academic career Hill concerned himself with both completing his dissertation in 1963 (The Fünfbilderserie and Medieval Anatomy), and securing a position as Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1964. His research primarily built upon his interest in medieval medicine and led to a series of publications, two of which were concerned with examining the “Five Picture Series” discovered by the University of Leipzig’s Karl Sudhoff and published in 1907 that Hill described as “a series of figures depicting veins, arteries, bones, nerves, and muscles.” In both articles, Hill discovered new iterations of the series— one in the Wellcome Medical Library in London and another in the Vatican Archives—from which he compared and contrasted the new finds with those of Sudhoff. Evident here already were characteristics that would become hallmarks of Hill’s methodology: careful attention to manuscripts (either on microfiche or personally handled) and a willingness to go as far afield as necessary to make comparative analyses demanding knowledge from a wide variety of disciplines. See Hill, “Another Member of the Sudhoff Fünfbilderserie—Wellcome MS. 5000” (in Sudhoff’s Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften, Bd. 43, H. 1, 1959: 13-19); and, with his dissertation advisor, Loren C. MacKinney, “A New Fünfbilderserie Manuscript—Vatican Palat. Lat. 1110” (in Sudhoff’s Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften, Bd. 48, H. 4, 1964: 323-330).] Indeed, some of Hill’s work with this set of pictures was so groundbreaking that his dissertation’s tentative identification of the “greater omentum” (a membranous layer of fatty tissue that covers the stomach and intestines) was cited as authoritative by a historical medical journal’s author who in 1977 was reassessing the Fünfbilderserie in light of new evidence. (Ynez Violé O’Neill, “The Fünfbilderserie—A Bridge to the Unknown,” in Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Vol. 51.4 (1977): 538-549, at 545.)
In 1965, his research in the Wellcome Library yielded two other articles. The first, “A Medieval German Wound Man: Wellcome MS 49,” provided an illustration, Middle High German text, and Hill’s translations (on both text and illustration) of what he called “an unusual wound man … which shows more types of injuries than most other wound figures. In addition to the usual knives and clubs, there are also insects, parasites, reptiles, and even a small dog in the illustration.” Most appreciated by the reader is Hill’s presentation of the original “Wound Man” in its High Middle German text, and then his translations in English on the same illustration (see plates below).

Given this attention to detail and facility with languages, it is small wonder that Hill demanded so much in the way of mastering Latin, German, and French for medieval graduate students expecting to earn a Ph.D. under his direction!
The second article in that year, “The Grain and the Spirit of Medieval Anatomy,” was written thanks to a U.S. Public Health Fellowship (No. GF-11,344) and grant from the Wellcome Trust in London. In this work, Hill used the “artery man” illustration from the Fünfbilderserie to make a wide-ranging assessment of an assertion in the original medieval manuscript that the *spiritus* originated from a “black grain” (*nigrum granum*) depicted in the heart of the artery man. Hill’s consideration of the term “spiritus” takes the reader on a wide-ranging tour-de-force of historical opinions to support his argument, beginning with a 17th-century medical tract on circulation (by William Harvey), and then contextualizing the medieval illustration with 12th century accounts by Alcher of Clairvaux, an 11th century “pulse” treatise (Alfanus of Salerno), excerpts from Albertus Magnus’s 13th century *Quaestiones super de animalibus*, relevant observations by Albert’s student St. Thomas Aquinas, an extensive use of Aristotle’s *De anima*, Galen’s thoughts on the subject, heart descriptions from 10th-century Arabic physicians (Rhazes, Haly Abbas), Arabic polymaths including Avicenna, and finally the grain so central in Chaucer’s *The Prioress’s Tale*. With respect to the latter, Hill argues that the grain the Virgin places on the boy’s tongue could represent the boy’s own disembodied spirit restored for a time so that he may sing in her honor. Hill suggests also that the grain could be considered an indispensable factor in the medieval understanding of the body’s biochemistry, and concluded the article (and argument) with another Chaucerian description, the death of Arcite in *The Knight’s Tale*: “it is reasonable to suppose that [Chaucer’s] placing of the spirit in the heart is meant to be taken literally . . . the phrase ‘His spirit changed hous’—presumably the house is the heart — resembles the reference to the heart in the Fünfbilderserie text: ‘in quo spiritus habitat.’ Chaucer’s ‘hous’ might also be compared with the statement of Albertus Magnus that the heart is the ‘domicilium’ or ‘habiticum’ of the soul.” [“The Grain and the Spirit of Medieval Anatomy,” in *Speculum* 40 (1965): 63-73.]
For all the interest and passion that they evoked in him, anatomical illustrations were not the only focus of Hill’s scholarship in the field of medical history. In 1960, his article—“Ambroise Paré: Sawbones or Scientist?”—reads initially as a mini-biography of the famed 16th-century “father of modern surgery” and physician to French kings best known for, as Hill points out, “three major contributions: the use of balm instead of boiling oil in the treatment of gunshot wounds; the ligaturing of blood vessels after amputation instead of using cautery; and the obstetrical practice now known as podalic version” (turning the fetus in the womb so that the feet are presented through the cervix). In his discussion of Paré’s major contributions, Hill makes the important case that, while Paré remains fully early modern in his acceptance of evil spirits and sorcerers in medicine, Paré opens the way for “humanitarianism” in his approach. Thus, Paré rejects folk remedies such as the “bezoar stone” (thought to make one immune to poisons), “unicorn horn” (for healing), and “mummy” extract (to stop internal bleeding). In short, Hill successfully directs historical attention to the pragmatic and empirical demands that a patient-minded and humanely-minded Paré placed upon medical recommendations, stating that the surgeon “…pursued most diligently those medical problems which were useless or harmless as remedies. But he did not challenge the whole fabric of false ideas of the 16th century.” (“Ambroise Paré: Sawbones or Scientist?”, in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Vol. 15: 1 (Jan., 1960): 45-58.)

The 1980 essay, “AHR Forum: Marc Bloch and Comparative History,” in *The American Historical Review* was perhaps the article of which Hill was most proud, because it was co-written with his wife, Alette Olin Hill, and because it stimulated so much debate in the historical and linguistic communities of the time. In this essay, the Hills addressed what they saw as incoherence in many of the papers presented at the American Historical Association’s 1978 Conference and its theme “comparative history.” In addressing this incoherence, the Hills used Marc Bloch’s 1928 article—“Pour une histoire com-
pare des sociétés européennes,” in which Bloch called for a comparative method in historical studies—as a means to explore methodological approaches in linguistic and historical inquiries. The Hills’s argumentation and analyses in the paper began a series of exchanges between the Hills and preeminent American and international historians and linguists that continued over the next four years. (See the replies by William H. Sewell and Sylvia Thrupp that follow the article in the same volume; “Marc Bloch and Comparative History,” in AHR 85 (1980): 828-857), and yielded a follow-up article and updated commentary by the Hills in another AHR volume a couple of years later, “Comparative History in Theory and Practice,” which the editors used as part of a forum where many participants discussed practices and critiques of current research in the field. (see AHR, 87 (1982): 123-143, the Hills’s reply and comments at 140-143).

The first two of Hill’s three published books were expressions of his academic passion for the peoples and history of Carolingian and Ottonian Germanic lands; notably, too, both The Rise of the First Reich: Germany in the Tenth Century (1969) and Medieval Monarchy in Action: The German Empire from Henry I to Henry IV (1972) were published when the historian was moving up the cursus honorum in the history department at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where in 1971 he earned the rank of Professor.

In the first work, Hill displays an interest in (and command of) political, diplomatic, linguistic, and paleographic aspects of 9th through 11th century history, providing general assessments and introductory comments to the primary source material of writers such as Wido- kind of Corvey, Liudprand of Cremona, Gerbert of Aurillac (Pope Sylvester II), Bernward of Hildersheim, and Otto III before excerpting secondary material from Geoffrey Barraclough, Martin Lintzel, Carl Erdmann, Walter Ullmann, Ernst Kantorowicz, and Percy Schrampm. He concluded the work with 14 plates of “art monuments” and an epilogue of suggested readings for the interested student. In his second book, Medieval Monarchy . . ., Hill intended to “present certain documents of the tenth and eleventh centuries which had not
yet appeared in English—the royal and imperial diplomas of the period,” and, after a 106-page “Introduction” that gives serious attention to respective rulers of “The Age of the Saxons and Salians,” Hill offered first a “Diplomatic Key: Parts of a ‘Typical’ Diploma” (e.g., Initial Protocol, Text, and Eschatol) and the fifty selected documents that give the reader insight into the book’s titular period. His third book was a survey text where he served as a general editor, *The Western World: The Development of Western Civilization* (1974).

While immersed in teaching and contributing publications to his field, Hill also prioritized staying as current as possible in a wide range of academic interests by regularly attending, participating, and serving on boards of professional associations. In summer 1971, he served as Resident Director, Institute for Basic Disciplines (Palaeography and Diplomatics) at the University of Colorado, Boulder (sponsored by the Medieval Academy of America). The next year he participated in the Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Universities (sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, History Honorary, May 1972), also at CU Boulder. During this period, he served as a Councillor for the American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Branch (1971-1974), and he considered it a particular honor in that decade also to be a Councillor and Member of the Executive Committee for the Medieval Academy of America (Cambridge, MA) from 1973-1976.

A return to an aspect of his military past as a veteran of the Korean War (U.S. Army, ARTY, Historian, 55th AAA Brigade) may be seen—along with his ability to also stay atop contemporary pop culture — in the paper he presented in 1989 at the Fourth General Conference of Studies in Medievalism (United States Military Academy West Point, N.Y., 5-7 October 1989): “The Antichrist in the Tenth and Twentieth Centuries: Adso and *Omen III.*” A couple of years later, he chaired a session for the 30th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Medieval History Association “Medieval Germany,” Saint John’s University, Collegeville, MN, October 17-19, 1991), and his last professional meeting he attended was, aptly, the annual meeting
of the Medieval Academy of America in Boston, Massachusetts, 14-16 April 1995. In the following year, he was the lead-off commentator on Professor C. Bynum’s article in the AHA Newsletter (1996) for a seminar consisting of the Department’s European historians (on April 5, 1996).

SERVICE & TEACHING

Hill made it a priority to meet the service obligations of his profession, taking an active interest from the start of his career to cultivate and develop fellow academics in many different fields, as may be seen from his participation in the 1960 seminar “Institute for the Teaching of the History of Science” at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, membership in UCLA’s Brian Research Institute, serving at CU Boulder as Convener of Chairs of the Social Science department (whose goal in 1984 was to establish guidelines for articles and books published by faculty members), and, notably, his serious involvement with the Medieval Academy of America’s Committee on Centers and Regional Associations (CARA). In 1982 he hosted the association in its October 1-2 meeting on the CU Boulder campus, and it was while attending the meeting of the Executive Committee of CARA in Toronto (October 4-6, 1984) that Hill was appointed to a three-person committee with professors John Leyerle of Toronto and Ute-Renate Blumenthal of Catholic University to evaluate CARA’s subcommittee on pedagogy. He served as a member of the Executive Committee of CARA from 1980-1984, and at the meeting of October 3-6, 1991, he represented the University of Colorado at CARA’s annual meeting where he reported (alongside Ed Nolan of English) on the Medieval Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Professor Hill enjoyed high esteem both from his peers in the history department at CU Boulder—he served as chair from 1981-1985 — and also across the university campus (Chair of the Department of Classics, 1986-1987). His opinions and recommendations were highly respected in that other departments at CU Boulder (and other
universities) sought his evaluations of, and recommendations on, professorial and tenure promotions for the following faculty: Gerald B. Kinneavy, Fidel Fajardo, Marjorie K. McIntosh, Piotr S. Gorecki, Mark Damen, David Pretty, Clifton B. Hall, and Peter Knox. In fact, it was during the late 1980s and early 1990s that Hill threw himself into a variety of evaluative roles that had meaningful impacts on university life at CU Boulder. For example, in 1985 he was both appointed to the University Committee for Diagnostic Conference in Foreign Languages and assisted the Department of French and Italian search for new chair; he was part for the Internal Review Team for the University of Colorado School of Law (1987); he was a member of the College Committee on Courses (1991-1994), and he worked on developing the core curriculum for the History Department from 1991-1994. In 1984-1985, he was elected Chair of the Council of Chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences. The end of the decade would see him sitting on the College of Arts and Sciences Ethics Committee from (1989-1991). Finally, near the end of the 1990s and toward his retirement, in 1997 he was appointed to the Boulder Campus Self-Study Committee in preparation for the North Central Association reaccreditation of the University in 2000.

His personality and generosity are clear in his colleagues’ memories. Fellow University of Colorado medievalist Professor Steven Epstein remarked on this magnanimity, saying: Boyd “gave me my first chance at a job and I would not have had a career without him. When I arrived in Boulder as a new assistant professor in 1984, I went to the chair’s office to ask Boyd about my job, what I was expected to do. He looked at me and said, ‘Teach history.’ I will never forget the freedom and responsibility he conveyed in those simple words.”

Such an observation encapsulates Boyd’s academic rigor, generosity of spirit, and true enthusiasm for his field and those who joined him in the department to teach each new generation of students. For his part, the courses that Hill taught at CU Boulder cleaved to traditional Western Civilization (ancient, medieval, and modern)
and medieval European readings courses, but his long career at the institution also afforded him many opportunities to offer graduate-level seminars that reflected his personal interests and passions, and sometimes even crossed disciplines: thus, “Culture and Institutions of the Middle Ages” (HIS 2511-2521); “Social Foundations of European Civilization” (HIS 4511), “Intellectual History of Medieval Europe” (HIS 4521); “History of Science from the Ancients to Sir Isaac Newton” (with Professor E. Ruestow, HIS 4314); “Latin Paleography” (HIS 7581); “English Constitutional History” (HIS 4013); “Graduate Historiography” (HIS 5000); and a particularly popular course for medieval studies, “History and Culture of Medieval England” (HIS 4113/ENGL4112), which was taught every other year since spring 1992, with enrollments of 90-180 students (!) For the authors’ part, it was Hill’s reading seminars on Eschatology, Latin Paleography, and assaying of topics such as Feudalism, the 12th Century Renaissance, Historiography, etc that were among the most demanding and exhilarating of our graduate school years, with many memories of Hill’s inimitable lecture and conversational style that demanded extensive reading from a variety of sources, rhetorical preparation for argumentation within the seminar, and a general expectation of us that the “historian’s craft” to which we’d committed ourselves would dominate our lives as much as it did his own.

He made a particular positive impact on both undergraduate and graduate students at CU Boulder, ensuring that degree progress was both steady and interesting—in recognition of this facility and interest, Hill was nominated by the Chair and Executive Committee for Outstanding Undergraduate Award (given by the Council on Academic Advising, Feb. 3, 1992) and he received the Outstanding Undergraduate Advisor Award presented by the University of Colorado at Boulder Council on Academic Advising for the academic year 1996-1997. In that same year, he was also nominated for the 1997 Teaching Recognition Award sponsored by Student Organization for Alumni Relations (SOAR), February, 1997.
Hill also demonstrated a particular interest in helping develop criteria for rewarding academic endeavors by peers and students in re scholarships. The involvement in this area of academe was remarkable: Hill was Director of Scholarships for the College of Arts and Sciences from 1992-1996, and during this time he served as a member of the University’s Task Force on Scholarships (1993), represented the College of Arts and Sciences at special meeting for scholarships in Denver (1993), gave an address at the annual College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship Luncheon (1994), and served in that same year as an outside evaluator for the Kayden Prize Committee (he also had served as a member of the Kayden Manuscript Committee in 1989-190). In 1995 he chaired the meeting of the university’s annual scholarship meeting, which was sponsored by the Offices of Central Administration and the Office of International Education. He was the university representative for the Truman Scholarships in 1995-1996, and from 1992-1996 was a member of the University of Colorado System’s Scholarship Committee.

EDITORIAL & REVIEWS

Besides sending a chill down his graduate students’ spines whenever he returned an essay with edits (often with recommendations to turn to the Chicago Manual of Style!) throughout his career, Hill’s editorial skills were repeatedly brought to bear in the matter of historical publications, most notably in the 1990s when he served as an outside reader and consultant on two textbooks: Strauss, et al, Western Civilization: The Contemporary Experiment Vol. I: To 1715 (1995) and Spielvogel’s Western Civilization. 3rd ed., Volume I (1997). Closer to his specialization in medieval Europe, Hill was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee for Creation of Speculum Anniversary Monographs (Toronto, Canada. 1975), and in 1985 he served as the Chairman of the Medieval Academy of America’s three-member committee to select the recipient of the John Nicholas Brown Prize (for the best first book by a scholar in the field of medieval studies in North America)—the presentation of that award was made at the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America at the University of
Indiana, April 12-14, 1985. At the start of the next decade he served as a member of the Social Science Prize Committee for articles and books in the Social Sciences (1990). He had many published book reviews (mostly in *Speculum* and *The American Historical Review*), with an emphasis on medieval Germany-focused works.

At the memorial service of 29 Sept 2018 at the University Memorial Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder, family, friends, colleagues, and students gathered to remember Boyd and honor his memory. He will be greatly missed, and RMMRA is a better organization for his being such an integral, foundational part of its existence.

*Ave atque vale*

Ginger L. Smoak, Ph.D.
University of Utah
RMMRA President

Todd P. Upton, Ph.D.
Metropolitan State University of Denver

**Obituary: Denver Post, July 29, 2018**

Boyd Howard Hill Jr. Died Monday, July 2nd, 2018, at the age of 87. He was at his home in Longmont, CO with family and friends. Boyd was born in Clearwater, FL on February 21st, 1931. He was the only child of Boyd Howard Hill Sr. and Minnie Cauthen Buchanan, both of Georgia. The Gulf of Mexico and its beaches were his playground. Tennis and softball were his sports and he still has some signed baseballs from the Yankees who held their spring training in St. Petersburg during his childhood. Boyd attended St. Pete High and later Duke University, where he met his wife to be, Alette Louise Olin. He completed his undergraduate work before being
drafted for the Korean War in 1953. He served in the U.S. Army Artillery in the 55th AAA Brigade. He was also historian for his unit. Boyd returned from service in 1955 to begin his graduate work. He completed his M.A. and Ph.D. in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he also married Alette, a Yankee, who was the love of his life. He taught briefly at L.S.U., Baton Rouge, before joining the History Department at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1964. He also was Visiting Assistant Professor at U.C.L.A. from 1966-1967. Boyd was elected Chair of the History Department in 1981 and worked in that capacity until 1985. He fought for the History Department. He was later brought in as a “hired gun” to quell turmoil in the Classics Department and served as its Chair for one year beginning in 1986. Boyd’s career at Boulder lasted until 2001, when he retired because of failing eyesight. His expertise was Medieval Europe and pre-modern anatomy and physiology. Some of his research was conducted in Berlin, Aachen, and Marburg, Germany. His notable accomplishments included being elected Chair of Chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences and President of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. He was listed in Who’s Who in America starting in 1984. Boyd was editor of “The Rise of the First Reich: Germany in the Tenth Century” and was author of the book, “Medieval Monarchy in Action: The German Empire from Henry I to Henry IV.” He also wrote “Adso and Omen III: The Antichrist in the Tenth and Twentieth Centuries.” He was especially proud of the article “Marc Bloch and Comparative History” in the AHR that he co-authored with Allette. During his academic career he received many teaching awards, was guest speaker at many events, and was appointed to many committees. Boyd enjoyed old movies, marching bands, horseback riding, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, sailing, scotch with friends and colleagues, and a good argument. And don’t forget bacon. Although losing his vision was difficult, he hardly ever complained and was always ready with a joke or jibe; but we know this was a great blow to him. Boyd’s COPD scared him, but he had many dedicated caregivers over the past five years who always answered the call day or
night to soothe him. His enthusiasm and generosity were noted by many. His thirst for knowledge and his feistiness continued to the end, and he was preparing notes for future articles which now will never be written. He loved the mountains and the snow of Colorado, having lived in Gold Hill, Jamestown and Boulder over the years. He moved to Longmont in the late nineties and lived there with his wife, Alette, and their German Shepherd, Koda, until the time of his death. If you ever happen to be alone in Hellems Hall on a dark night and you catch the smell of Kool menthol cigarettes, hear the tapping keys of an IBM Selectric typewriter or a booming laugh echoing from down the hallway, it’s probably just Boyd preparing his next lecture. We will miss our good friend. Boyd is survived by his wife Alette, his two sons Buck and Michael, and grandchildren Ian and Olivia. A service will be held in the fall at a date yet to be determined. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in St. Petersburg, Florida. His ashes will be spread at Buchanan Castle, Aachen Cathedral and in the Gulf of Mexico.