

IN MEMORIAM  
BAILEY W. DIFFIE (1902-1983)

On January 12, 1983, Bailey W. Diffie died suddenly and unexpectedly in his home in Los Angeles. His long and productive academic career spanned well over a half century.

Bailey Diffie was born on June 27, 1902, in Detroit, Texas. After being graduated from Southeastern Teachers College in Durant, Oklahoma, in 1923, he earned an M.A. degree from Texas Christian University in 1926. He received his Ph.D. in History in 1929 from the University of Madrid.

In 1930, Dr. Diffie joined the faculty of the City College of New York, from which he retired in 1968. Over the years, he taught as visiting professor at Yale, Columbia, the University of Washington, the University of Texas, and the University of Miami. He was Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Southern California from 1970 until his death. He actively participated in the academic life of Southern California.

He wrote numerous articles and books, among which were *Puerto Rico: A Broken Pledge*; *Prelude to Empire: Portugal Overseas before Henry the Navigator*; and with George D. Wimius *The Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580*. Recently he completed the manuscript for a colonial history of Brazil and had been in correspondence with its publisher.

His most significant single contribution to the field of Latin American history was his monumental *Latin American Civilization: Colonial Period* that first appeared in 1945. The book was reissued in 1967 with a lengthy new bibliographical introduction. It ranks as a significant pioneer work that in many ways set the tone for future studies of the Latin American past. Professor Diffie understood and emphasized that the creation of a unique and vibrant Latin American civilization resulted from the joint enterprise of Amerindians, Europeans, and Africans. Each group contributed and left its imprint. Unusual for the period in which he wrote, he integrated political and economic history with lively discussions of social and intellectual themes. Finally, his book devoted considerable space to the study of Portuguese America, until then largely neglected or minimized in studies of the Latin American colonial past. The vision and understanding of Bailey W. Diffie thus helped to encourage a new period of research, writing, understanding, and teaching of Latin American history in the United States.

Professor Diffie enjoyed traveling. He knew well the archives and libraries of the United States, Iberia, and Latin America. He possessed a zest, energy, and intelligence that enriched the study of Latin American history and endeared him to students, colleagues, and friends.

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