

Robert D. Cuff

The Department of History and the Schulich School at the University of York and the business history community lost a beloved colleague with the sudden passing of Bob Cuff on November 25, 2001, at age sixty.

Bob was one of the early pioneers and brightest academic stars of the fledgling York University in Toronto, and a valued member of the editorial board of *Enterprise & Society*. After graduating from the University of Toronto in Modern History in 1963, Bob flew through the Ph.D. program at Princeton, completing an ambitious thesis for Arthur Link on U.S. mobilization for World War I in only three years. He was hired by the University of Rochester in 1967, but soon thereafter Bob and his wife Marylou returned to Toronto to raise their family and to help build a new university.

During the 1970s Bob Cuff was one of the scholars who established York's reputation for productivity and intellectual vitality, particularly in History. His landmark book, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations During World War I* (1973) remains the standard work on the subject. Through his book, his many articles, and his review essays, Bob came to be known in the 1970s as one of the major figures of "the organizational synthesis" in U.S. history. Though he had become by profession a specialist in business-government relations in the United States, Bob also maintained a lively interest in Canadian history and public affairs. He and Jack Granatstein collaborated on several books and articles on Canada-U.S. relations. Bob also played a quiet behind-the-scenes role in organizing the Canadian Association of American Studies.

Bob Cuff began to turn his personal and professional attention to business education in the 1980s. His studies of the growth of the military-industrial complex in World War I had led him to focus on the rise of bureaucratic methods of command and control. This in turn led him to examine for the first time the development of techniques of statistical measurement and management in U.S. universities, mainly business schools. Bob was able to connect his research interest with teaching practice in the 1980s during two stints at the Harvard Business School. During this period Bob made a name for himself with a series of tightly focused essays on the personnel, tech-

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niques, and political institutionalization of production control systems. Slowly his attention had begun to shift toward the history of the profession of management.

When he returned to York in the early 1990s with his new interest in both the history of management and teaching managers, Bob sought a joint appointment with the Business School and the History Department. His historical understanding informed his teaching, and in turn his experience with colleagues and students in the business school informed his historical research. Bob brought the same professional credibility, seemingly effortless competence, and level-headed decency to the burgeoning Schulich School in the 1990s as he had to the History Department earlier.

Bob Cuff brought style, performance, academic credibility, professional dedication, and above all human decency to York. He was admired as a scholar and loved as a human being. The business history community will miss his incisive arguments, his demanding standards, gentle, probing questions, and his constructive critical stance.

To honor Bob, York University has established the Robert Cuff Fellowship, which will provide travel grants to graduate students researching U.S. topics and enrolled either in York's history department or the Schulich School. Donations to the "York University/Cuff Fellowship" may be sent to Marc Egnal, History Department, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3.

Marlene Shore
York University