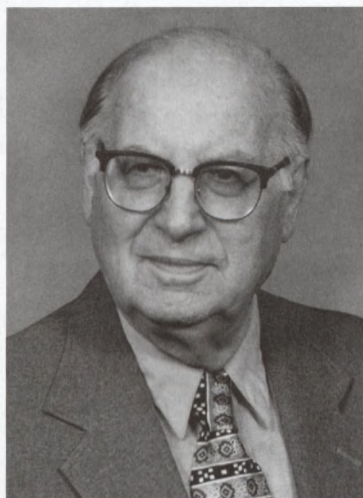


Adolf E. “Dolf” Schroeder (1916–2013): In Memoriam

Our friend and colleague of many years, Adolf E. Schroeder, professor emeritus of German studies at the University of Missouri, died in Columbia, Missouri, on March 29, 2013, after a brief illness. “Dolf” was well known in SGAS circles having been one of “founding fathers” of our association. In addition to serving on the Editorial Board of the SGAS *Yearbook* until his death, he had also organized the SGAS Symposium at the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1980 and was the recipient of the SGAS Outstanding Achievement Award presented to him at the 1986 Symposium in Cincinnati, Ohio. As editor of the *Yearbook* I can truly say



that Dolf’s attention to detail, his constructive critiques of essays and, most of all, his collegiality, bountiful sense of humor, love of German songs, and personal friendship will be sorely missed.

Born February 1, 1916, in Covington, Virginia, Dolf was the son of recent German immigrants to the United States. Due to family circumstances, he was taken to Germany at age five and placed in the care of foster parents in Dessau. After being drafted into the Germany army in the mid-1930s, he managed to return as a U.S. citizen to the United States in 1938, and graduated from the University of Illinois in 1941. After starting work on an M.A. at Louisiana State University, he served in the U.S. Army from 1942-46—thus serving in both the German and the American army within one decade! After receiving an M.A. in German Literature at L.S.U. and a Ph.D. from

Ohio State University, he later taught at Ohio State, Kent State University in Ohio, the University of Massachusetts, L.S.U., and at the University of Missouri in 1946-47 and from 1970 until his retirement in 1985.

Interested in early language learning, he established classes in German and Russian for fourth-graders in Ohio and Massachusetts and directed an NDEA program for teachers in Ohio. In Missouri, he became interested in German, French and other European settlements in the state and collected many photographs and oral histories relating to immigrant life in Missouri. He and his wife Rebecca ("Becky") were largely responsible for re-establishing the Missouri Folklore Society in the state in 1977 and became widely recognized for their contributions to the preservation of the state's cultural history and folklore. Dolf had numerous publications including several translations of German texts. To mention one that comes immediately to mind is Dolf's moving translation of the letters of German immigrant Henriette Bruns of Westphalia and later Jefferson City, Missouri: *Hold Dear As Always: Jette, a German Immigrant's Life in Letters*, edited with Carla Schulz-Geisberg and published in 1988. Just prior to his death, Dolf completed the translation and editing of Gert Goebel's *Länger als ein Menschenleben in Missouri* (1877). The posthumous publication of that translation, *Longer than a Man's Lifetime in Missouri*, is a fitting tribute to his scholarly career and his many contributions to the field of German-American Studies (see book review on pages 260-61 in this volume).

Dolf and Becky also explored many other places in the state collecting folk songs and stories. With his vast knowledge of the state, he eagerly assisted students, researchers, and writers with their projects. Typical of Dolf's approach was to bring scholars and members of an ethnic community together so that they could collaborate in documenting, discussing and analyzing the community's heritage in a meaningful way. One such project involved Concordia, Missouri, founded in the late 1830s by immigrants from northern Germany. In the early 1990s, members of the community, many of whom still fluent in their Low German dialect, sought support in learning more about their heritage. In response, Dolf brought together scholars to explore the history, language and material culture of the community with the involvement of the residents of Concordia. The two-year research project resulted in the preservation of some 600 pages of church and community history, scholarly presentations in the community and the publication of the booklet *Concordia, Missouri: A Heritage Preserved: Essays on Cultural Survival* (Columbia, MO: Western Historical Manuscript Collection, 1996). We are indebted to Dolf Schroeder for his untiring efforts to document and preserve the ethnic heritage of his adopted state of Missouri. His absence will be

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strongly felt by all members of his family, his friends, and fellow historians and folklorists and especially his colleagues in German-American Studies.

William D. Keel, editor

