

Grinnell historian Wall dies; memorial is set

Joseph Frazier Wall, 75, a prize-winning Grinnell College historian, died of a heart attack Monday, Oct. 9, at Grinnell Regional Medical Center.

The body has been cremated. A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15, in Herrick Chapel on the college campus.

Prof. Wall, who had taught at Grinnell since 1947 and retired in 1990, was recognized as the leading authority on industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. On the Grinnell campus and in the community, he was recognized as a leading authority on the college's history, especially Grinnell's early years.

"Joe Wall, perhaps as much as any living individual, embodied the highest ideals of Grinnell College," said Wayne Moyer, Rosenfield professor and director of the Rosenfield Public Affairs Program. "He was a central part of the college community from when he entered as a transfer student in 1938 to the present, with interludes for service in the U.S. Navy in World War II and at the State University of New York in the late 1980s. We will miss him greatly."

A role model

Moyer described Wall as "a role model for all of us in the faculty." Wall, he said, "also set the tone for the Rosenfield Program in encour-

aging campus debate on a wide variety of issues related to public affairs, international relations and human rights, and in promoting public service."

Grinnell College President Pamela Ferguson remarked: "Joe has been a strong part of the community, as a scholar and an administrator. He served the community with great tact and eloquence, especially during the turbulent times of the 1960s and early 1970s."

Wall was dean of the college from 1969 to 1973. In 1970, in the aftermath of the shooting deaths of four students at Kent State University in Ohio, it was Wall who announced the only early closing of Grinnell College. No graduation ceremony was held that year, and classes were dismissed two weeks early. Wall's announcement was made to students, faculty, staff and community members as thousands gathered in the college's Darby Gymnasium.

The college's history

Together, Wall and Alan Jones, L.F. Parker professor of history, had been traveling the country this year, delivering conversational talks about the college's history to Grinnell alumni in celebration of the college's sesquicentennial. Wall

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drew his stories from the 1890s, while Jones talked about the 1960s, both turbulent times in the college's history.

Wall was born July 10, 1920, in Des Moines. He spent his boyhood years in Fort Dodge and was a 1941 graduate of Grinnell College with a bachelor's degree in history. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, he earned his M.A. degree at Harvard University and his Ph.D. at Columbia University, both in American history.

He was married to Beatrice Mills April 16, 1944.

Wall was the co-recipient of the Iowa Civil Liberties Union Award in 1956 for a pamphlet on basic freedom. He served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant, with active duty from 1942 to 1946 during World War II.

Was faculty chair, dean

At Grinnell, he was named Roberts honor professor in 1960, L.F. Parker professor of history in 1961, E.D. Strong distinguished professor in 1972 and the first Rosenfield professor and director of the Rosenfield Program in Public Affairs, International Relations and Human Rights from 1980 to 1985. He served as chairman of the faculty from 1966 to 1970 and as dean of the college from 1969 to 1973.

During leaves from his duties at Grinnell, Wall had been a Fulbright research scholar at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. He also served as chairman of the Department of History at the State University of New York at Albany from 1978 to 1980.

Wall's first book, "Henry Waterson: Reconstructed Rebel," was published in 1956 by Oxford University Press. His second, "Andrew Carnegie," published by Oxford in 1970, won the prestigious Bancroft Prize in American History. The 1,150-page book was cited as "a masterly study of the great empire-builder and philanthropist, and an engrossing chronicle of the rise of Big Business in the United States."

Other works

Wall followed his biography of Carnegie with a collection of writings by the industrialist, "The Andrew Carnegie Reader," the first single-volume anthology of Carnegie's writings to cover the span of his life. Published in 1992, the book commemorated the 73rd anniversary of Carnegie's death.

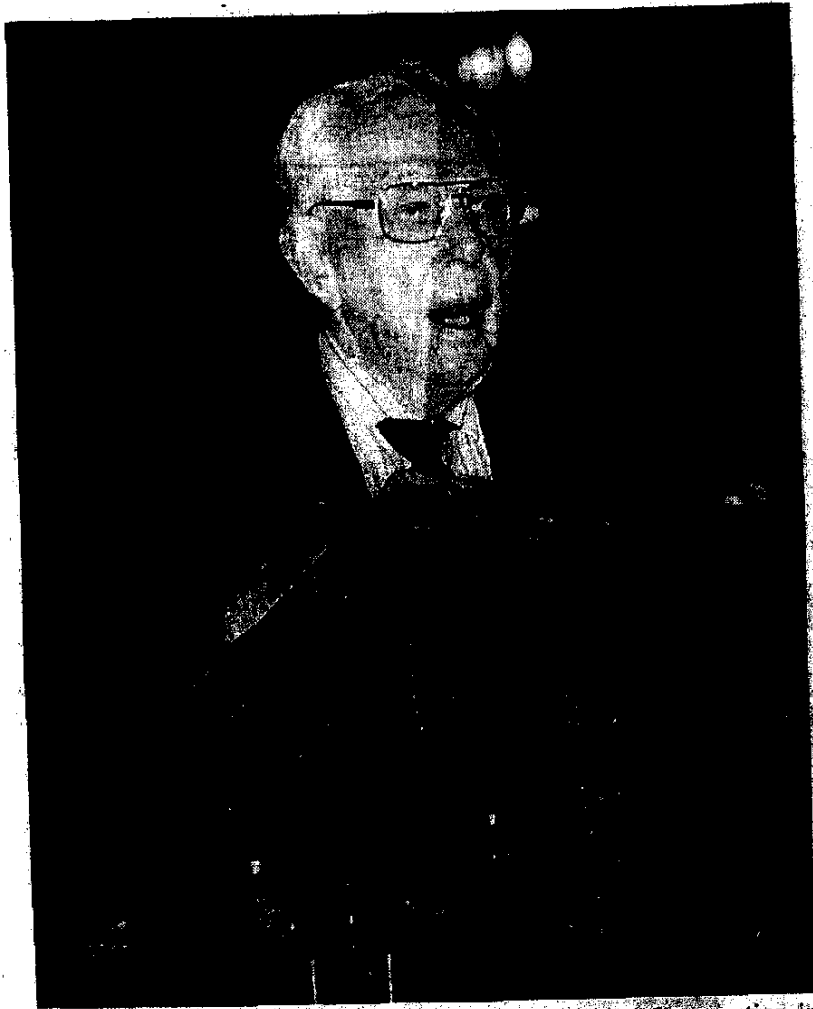
In 1990, Wall's "Alfred I. Du Pont: The Man and his Family" was published by Oxford and was a finalist for the 1991 Pulitzer Prize.

Wall also contributed to the celebration of America's Bicentennial with the book "Iowa: A History." At the time of his death, he was working on a book about the history of Grinnell College.

Surviving are his wife, Beatrice; three children, April Ane Knutson of Minneapolis, Minn., Joel of Madison, Wis., and Julia Rude of Decorah, and six grandchildren.

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Joe Walf is pictured speaking at a recent Scholars' Convocation in Herrick Chapel. He died of a heart attack Monday afternoon.