

Schwarz, Richard William (1925–2013)

BRIAN E. STRAYER

Brian E. Strayer, Ph.D. (University of Iowa). Strayer taught history at Jackson (MI) Junior Academy, the University of Iowa, Southern Adventist University, and Andrews University for 41 years. He has written 10 books, 120 scholarly and professional articles, 40 reviews and critiques in French and Adventist history and directed three Adventist heritage tours of New England. He writes a weekly column ("The Past Is Always Present") in the *Journal Era* and shares Adventist history at camp meetings, schools, and churches.

Richard William Schwarz was a history professor, author, and educational administrator.

Early Life

Richard William Schwarz was born on September 11, 1925, near Wataga, Illinois, to George W. Schwarz, a farmer and World War I veteran, and Mildred (Imschweiler) Schwarz, a nurse at Hinsdale Sanitarium in the suburbs of Chicago. Both parents were first-generation Seventh-day Adventists. In 1936, 11-year-old Richard was baptized into the Adventist Church.¹

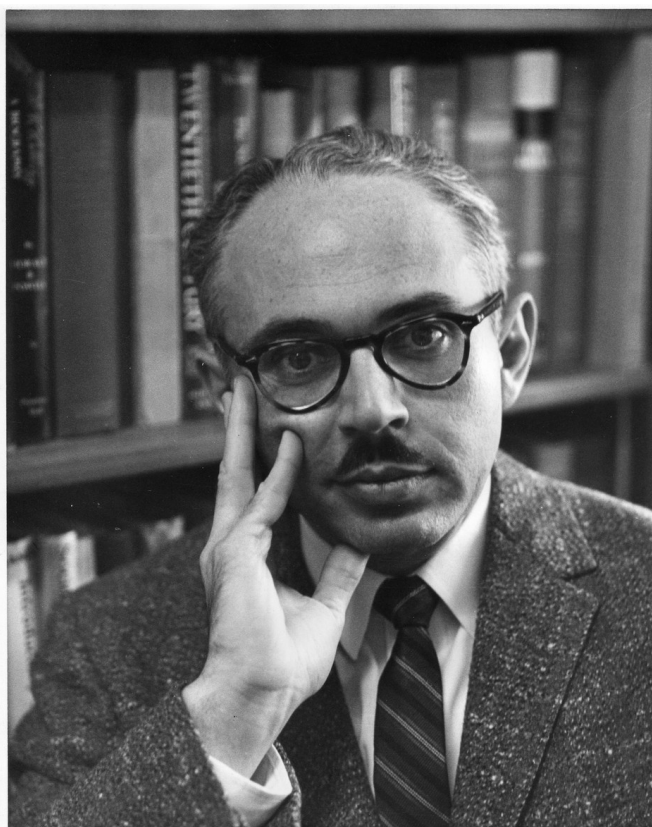
Between 1931 and 1938, Richard attended a country school with one teacher, a dozen pupils, and a meager library, nearly all of whose books he read while completing eight grades in seven years. He finished ninth grade by correspondence while living with an aunt and uncle in Galesburg, Illinois. From 1939 to 1942, he attended Broadview Academy in La Grange, Illinois, working his way through school as a janitor and dormitory monitor. After receiving his diploma in May 1942, he attended Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) for a year. As a member of the custodial staff that year, he rose at 5:30 a.m. to turn on the registers, which heated the academy classrooms, and ring the old Battle Creek College bell in South Hall. In the midst of World War II, he received an agricultural deferment from military service and returned to the family farm in Illinois.

Education, Marriage, and Academy Teaching

In June 1944, growing weary of farming, Schwarz took the train to the Great Lakes Naval Station northwest of Chicago for basic military training, after which he was dispatched to Madison, Wisconsin, to become a radioman. Since he refused to train or work on Sabbath, he was sent to San Francisco for general sea duty. There, Seaman First Class Schwarz worked in the Fleet Post Office for a Jewish supervisor, who gave him Sabbaths off and allowed him to live in civilian housing.² In 1945, Mailman Third Class Schwarz was sent to the Philippines, serving in the Fleet Post Office in Samar and Leyte for 10 months. He was honorably discharged at San Francisco in 1946. Three weeks after he returned home, Richard's mother died following surgery.

He returned to Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) in the Fall of 1946 as a history major with minors in business, education, and English. He joined the Teachers of Tomorrow Club. Following graduation from EMC in June 1949, Richard returned to Broadview Academy and, from 1949 to 1953, taught history and general business courses while serving as librarian and registrar and working on a master's degree in library science at the University of Illinois. On June 11, 1950, he married Joyce Frances Anderson from Minneapolis. Together, they raised three children: Constance Kay, Richard Paul, and Dwight Luther.

In 1953, the family returned to Adelpian Academy near Holly, Michigan, where Richard taught government, history, and economics while serving as assistant librarian. During the next two years at Adelpian, he served as assistant librarian at the Minneapolis Public Library in the summer of 1954 and completed his master of science degree in library science in 1955.



Richard W. Schwarz.
Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

History Professor, Author, and University Administrator

In 1955, Schwarz began a distinguished career of 35 years at Andrews University. Between 1955 and 1958, he served as a librarian and instructor in history and economics. After 1958, he taught full time in the history department while Joyce taught art in the Village Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School. Every year, Richard taught undergraduate courses in western civilization, principles of sociology, Russian history, modern USA history, the British Empire and the Commonwealth, Seventh-day Adventist history, and school library administration. In the 1960s, he created the first black history course ever offered at Andrews University.³ He also taught graduate courses in historical methods and research as well as in great historians.

In 1959, Schwarz earned a master of arts degree in history with a minor in sociology from the University of Michigan and was advanced in rank to assistant professor of history. Two years later, he completed his Ph.D. in history under Professor Sidney Fine at the University of Michigan. His dissertation was titled "John Harvey Kellogg, American Health Reformer." In 1963, Dr. Schwarz became chair of the history and political science department, a position he would hold for the next 11 years.

During the 1960s, Dr. Schwarz codirected with Dr. Merlene Ogden two highly popular three-month study tours of Europe. In 1968, he was advanced to professor of history, and, in 1970, his revised dissertation was published by Southern Publishing Association as *John Harvey Kellogg, MD*. Dr. Schwarz's vast research, his college teaching experience in Adventist history, and his significant biography of Kellogg led the General Conference Education Department to ask him to write the first denominational history textbook for a college-level course, published in 1979 as *Light Bearers to the Remnant*.

In 1977, Dr. Schwarz was chosen as Andrews University's vice president for academic administration. Over the next 10 years, his responsibilities would take him to Africa, Mexico, and the Caribbean numerous times as he consulted with various educational institutions affiliated with Andrews University. During the summers, he conducted workshops and maintained a rigorous scholarly and publication schedule. In 1987 at age 62, he resigned his administrative post and returned to full-time teaching in the history and political science department.

Scholarship

As an outstanding scholar in the field of Seventh-day Adventist history, Dr. Schwarz published numerous articles and book reviews in such journals as *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, *Adventist Heritage*, *Spectrum*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, *The Library Journal*, *The Journal of True Education*, and the *Dictionary of American Biography*. He contributed a chapter to the book "Adventism in America," edited by his colleague Gary Land and published in 1986 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.⁴

Dr. Schwarz also presented scholarly and professional papers at conferences of the Michigan Academy of Science, the Historical Society of Michigan, and the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians. He held active memberships in the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians, Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, and Phi Kappa Phi. His name and contributions appear in such publications as *Who's Who in America*, *The Directory of American Scholars*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Who's Who Among Authors and Journalists*, *The Dictionary of International Biography*, and the *International Authors' and Writers' Who's Who*.

Wider Areas of Service

In addition to his teaching, administrative, and scholarly contributions, Dr. Schwarz dedicated his life to service in many areas. He was frequently consulted for his historical expertise by the Kellogg Museum in Battle Creek, Michigan, and the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For many years, he served as a consulting editor for *Adventist Heritage* magazine and, from 1967 to 1972, as editor of the international newsletter for Seventh-day Adventist historians. Widely known in the Michiana area, he was greatly in demand as a public speaker at Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Exchange, and City clubs as well as a member of the Dowagiac Human Relations Council. For decades, he also served as a deacon, Sabbath school superintendent, and Seminary Sabbath school teacher at Pioneer Memorial Church, the Andrews University campus church. In his spare time, he enjoyed gardening, reading, and traveling with his family.

Later Life

In 1990, after 41 years of denominational service, Dr. Schwarz retired to his home on 229 North Maplewood Drive to cultivate his large garden. He volunteered his time as a reference librarian at the Berrien Springs Community Library. In 1994, Richard and Joyce moved to Hendersonville, North Carolina, where they lived in an apartment at Fletcher Park Villas. During the next 13 years, he served as an elder in the Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church, sat on the Board of the Hendersonville Rescue Mission, and joined the Hendersonville Christian Business Men's Club. In May 2007, Richard and Joyce moved to Kaneohe, Hawaii, to live with their son Dwight and his wife, Launnies, and attend the Kailua Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dr. Richard William Schwarz died on May 16, 2013, at age 87. On June

18, his ashes were interred with full military honors in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Contributions

Dr. Richard William Schwarz's major contributions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to the profession of history in general are the hundreds of history undergraduate and graduate students he taught in his demanding courses, many of whom today teach history in high schools, academies, colleges, and universities around the world, as well as the scholarly publications he produced during his career, particularly in Adventist history. His friends and associates remember him for his wry sense of humor, generosity, and kind Christian spirit for those who disagreed with him.

SOURCES

"Richard Schwarz obituary." *The Journal Era*, June 12, 2013.

"Richard William Schwarz obituary." *Focus*, Spring 2013.

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Schwarz, Richard W. Personal Papers and Files, 1955-1990. University Archives, Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Strayer, Brian E. "Life Sketch for Dr. Richard W. Schwarz." Tribute read at Richard Schwarz's Memorial Service. Pioneer Memorial Church, Andrews University, July 27, 2013.

NOTES

1. "Richard Schwarz obituary," *The Journal Era* (Berrien Springs, MI), June 12, 2013, 25-26.?
2. "Richard William Schwarz obituary," *Focus* (Spring 2013): 27.?
3. Ibid.?
4. Richard W. Schwarz, "The Perils of Growth, 1886-1905," in *Adventism in America: A History*, ed. Gary Land (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986).?

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