

Stuart Curran, English

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Stuart Curran

Stuart Curran, an emeritus professor of English in the School of Arts & Sciences, died on October 7. He was 84.

Dr. Curran received his BA and MA from the University of Michigan and his PhD from Harvard University. In 1974, he joined Penn's faculty as a professor of English in the School of Arts & Sciences; concurrently, he was also appointed as a professor in the College of General Studies, the forerunner to today's College of Liberal & Professional Studies. In 1996, he was appointed the inaugural Vartan Gregorian Professor of English (*Almanac* October 15, 1996 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v43/n08/saschair.html>)), a chair created by 1959 Wharton alumnus Saul P. Steinberg to honor Dr. Gregorian, the first dean of SAS who later served as Penn provost.

Dr. Curran was a leading romanticist. His work was supported by fellowships from the Huntington Library, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Guggenheim Foundation, and in 2010, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was the author of groundbreaking books on Percy Bysshe Shelley (which helped restore the poet's place in literary history), one of several editors of the Johns Hopkins University Press Shelley edition, and the editor of novels by Mary Shelley, Charlotte Smith, and other female writers of the eighteenth century.

The author of two critical studies of Percy Bysshe Shelley as well as the standard bibliography on the poet, Dr. Curran was for many years the editor of the *Keats-Shelley Journal*. He also served as president of the Keats-Shelley Association of America.

Dr. Curran worked with American students in Italy, studying Romantic relationships in the time of Keats and Byron, and established the Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel. The fund honors Dr. Curran's deep commitment to stimulating and guiding graduate student research.

In 2004, Dr. Curran received Penn's Provost's Award for Distinguished PhD Teaching and Mentoring, awarded for the first time in that year. David Wallace, English department chair at the time, said, "in surveying the great mass of responses from current and former students, four key qualities of Stuart's mentorship come to the fore: brilliance, precision, accessibility, and compassion."

"Stuart's attentiveness to his students does not end with the close of their graduate careers," wrote a former student of Dr. Curran. "In the 22 years I have been teaching, Stuart has been unfailingly supportive, generous of his time, advice, invitations to panels, and solicitations for essays and reviews." Another said, "no one who is not a member of my family has ever lavished on me the kind of care, attention, and dedication that I found as his student, nor has anyone ever challenged me as much." Dr. Curran retired from Penn in 2009 and was awarded emeritus status.

Dr. Curran is survived by his husband of 57 years, Joseph Wittreich; his brother, Richard Curran; his niece, Ellen Curran Wells; his nephews, Bruce, Marc, and John Curran; and by friends, generations of students and colleagues. A memorial service will take place at a later date.