

# COMMONWEALTH

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# COMMONWEALTH: A Journal of Political Science

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## *In Memoriam*

*COMMONWEALTH* regrets to note the death on February 22, 2006 of one of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association's senior members, Dr. John "Jack" Hopkirk who was 79. Dr. Gordon Henderson of Widener University graciously provided the following reflections.

Jack earned his B.A. from Swarthmore College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. In 1960 he joined Widener University, then Pennsylvania Military College (PMC), as an assistant professor of political science specializing in American government and constitutional law. Before that he taught at Harper College and served as chief of the Personnel Training Section of the New York State Health Department in Albany.

As chair of Widener's Liberal Arts Division, Jack was instrumental in the creation of several new academic departments. He also helped in establishing the College of Nursing. He represented the college as a member of the Greater Chester Movement, and he ran a college-sponsored program to find housing for families displaced by urban renewal. He participated in an institute for race relations for teachers in Chester schools, and he directed an interdisciplinary institute on urban affairs. During his tenure as head of the Liberal Arts Division, the first African-American professor was hired at the college.

Jack served as President of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association and vice-president of the Northeastern Political Science Association. He was a long-time member of the board of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. In fact, he met his wife of 48 years, Priscilla, in 1954 at that body's annual meeting. They would both come to teach political science, Jack at PMC/Widener, and Priscilla at Villanova.

Jack had a passion for Supreme Court decisions. His constitutional law classes brought to life the intrigue behind seemingly mundane legal disputes. He believed that governmental decisions were the outcome of complex personal, political, and institutional interactions and that one must look beyond official and media explanations to find an accurate account. Jack carried this conviction into retirement when he and Priscilla devoted themselves to a study of the 60 year long political saga surrounding the planning and construction of the "Blue Route" linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike with Interstate 95.

Jack was an unrepentant story-teller. This came in handy when he and Priscilla, blissfully retired, began to tour the globe with trips to England, France, Egypt, India, China, Japan, and New Zealand as well as cruises of the Mediterranean and along the coasts of Africa and South America. The Hopkirks also allowed themselves plenty of time to indulge their other shared passion: ballroom dancing.

My colleagues and I knew Jack as a man with a heart of gold. His compassion for individuals, groups, and entire communities is reflected not only in his record of public service but also in the many kindnesses he did for so many of his friends, neighbors, and colleagues.



DENNIS M. O'BRIEN  
THE SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

I am very pleased to write a preface for this volume of **COMMONWEALTH: A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**. While this is the thirteenth edition of the journal published by the Pennsylvania Political Science Association (PPSA), it represents the first joint venture between the PPSA and the Legislative Office for Research Liaison (LORL)—the non-partisan research liaison office of the House of Representatives.

I feel that the legislature will benefit from this venture in a number of ways. First, it will encourage more scholarly research on state and local government in Pennsylvania and the region. Second, this joint venture will help build stronger ties between the General Assembly and college and university faculty in the Commonwealth, many of whom assist the legislative process by responding to specific LORL inquiries, participating in policy seminars and committee meetings, and generally assisting with policy analysis on an informal basis.

It is my hope that this venture will lead to other cooperative endeavors as LORL expands its interaction with the university community in order to better serve this House and the people of Pennsylvania.

I send best wishes for future success of the journal to the editorial staff, authors and readers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis M. O'Brien".

Dennis M. O'Brien