In Memory of
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Leonard W. Hayward

The Newport Historical Society and the community at large suffered a very real loss with the recent death of Leonard W. Hayward. Bill was elected a Director of the Society in May 1994, shortly after his retirement as Vice President of Engineering at Newport Hospital, where he had served with distinction for twenty-five years. He brought to the Society not only his years of practical, hands-on experience, but a unique problem-solving ability made possible from his technical background and his deep understanding of human nature and how to challenge everyone who worked with him to perform at their best.

When Bill became Chair of the Properties Committee, the Society was experiencing very costly start-up problems with the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system of the newly-completed Museum of Newport History at the Brick Market, which threatened the museum’s continued operation. As it developed, the problem involved elements of system design, fabrication, and installation, and the associated responsible contractors. Bill, with tact and persuasion, was able to bring the several parties together and solve the problem, averting what would have been a real crisis for the Society.

In the following year, the Historical Society received a generous grant from the Alletta Morris McBean Foundation to stabilize the Friends Meeting House. In typical Hayward fashion, Bill became totally immersed in the project. He worked with the selected contractor to define all of the work packages in unambiguous detail, and once the project was initiated, visited the work site every day as unofficial “clerk of the works.” His careful oversight and on-the-scene decision-making permitted more work to be accomplished than had originally been budgeted, resulting in a final product of which all Newport can be proud.

Even after learning that he was seriously ill, Bill continued to support the Society by preparing plans and work packages for the stabilization of the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House, made possible by a grant from the Champlin Foundations.

There is no question that Newport is a better place thanks to the contributions of Leonard W. Hayward, a conclusion that I know is shared by the Seamen’s Church Institute, New Visions for Newport County, and many other organizations that are deeply indebted to his caring nature and firm commitment.

Bradford A. Becken
William Henry Jordy

Architectural history suffered a unique loss with the death of William Henry Jordy on August 10, 1997. “Jordy,” as he was known to close friends and students, was a member and friend of the Newport Historical Society, as well as an active professional presence for the past six years on its Building Planning Committee as it developed plans for the Center for Newport History. He conducted research at the Society for his scholarly works, most recently for his upcoming volume, Buildings of Rhode Island.

Professor Jordy’s great passion for architecture and the visual arts, particularly of the modern period, was apparent to anyone who heard his illuminating ideas and perceptive analysis of buildings and those who designed them—whether in a Newport committee meeting, a preservation panel in Providence, a walking tour of Beaux-Arts buildings in New York, or, as was most likely the case, in over three decades of college teaching. He was Henry Goddard Ledyard Professor at Brown University and had received numerous other academic awards and accolades, including an honorary degree from his alma mater, Bard College. Beyond such official laurels was the admiration, love, and respect for hundreds of students, from those who were inspired to pursue the study of architecture as a profession as well as those for whom architecture was part of a strong liberal education.

His work of the 1960s on how early European modernism influenced American architecture established his leadership in modernist studies. It informed the method of his later volumes in the series, American Buildings and their Architects, where he employed intensive case studies of a handful of buildings to illuminate his broader scholarly and critical points. Though he had been the student of such luminary figures in pre-modern European art historical studies as Erwin Panofsky and Richard Krautheimer, Jordy was always an Americanist at heart. The exhibition and catalog, Buildings on Paper: Two Hundred Years of Rhode Island Architecture, for which he was a co-author and organizer, remains a major resource for anyone interested in the built environment of Rhode Island. The Buildings of Rhode Island guidebook on which he was working at the time of his death (and to which he invited several former graduate students to contribute) will surely be the reference guide for the state’s architectural heritage well into the foreseeable future.

Jordy’s personal warmth, great wit, and prodigious energy affected all those around him, but other personal interests were not as well known, for example, his love for jazz music or his knowledge of contemporary, “cutting edge” sculpture. It was an inquisitive attitude about the world that brought him to such varied topics. Once, when preparing a walking tour with one of his graduate students for a Brown
University alumni group, he and the student entered a commercial cast iron building in lower Manhattan. Upon meeting the building manager, Jordy introduced them both—one a nationally known professor from a prestigious university and the other a “lowly” doctoral candidate—as “students of architecture.” Such humble demeanor, generosity of spirit, and boyish enthusiasm always informed his analytical eye and the bright eloquent language he brought to what he said and what he wrote.

It was always a pleasure to view buildings with him firsthand; standing in front of a shingle style house or a Wall Street skyscraper or a postmodern library, he would visually “parse” its layered significance of form, context, and symbolism, making it come alive. He will be missed by all of us who knew him as a mentor, advisor, colleague, and friend.

Ronald J. Onorato