

RICHARD JACOB SMETHURST



Dick Smethurst, aged 90, died peacefully in the early morning on Saturday, May 4, 2024, in the Westminster Place Senior Living facility in Oakmont, PA. He was born in 1933 in Carlisle, PA, the youngest son of Bill and Helen (nee Wiener) Smethurst. His childhood years were happily spent first in Bloomfield and later in Montclair, NJ.

Dick attended Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA where he met his future wife Mae Johnson in the Classical Documents room at the library during his junior year when Mae was just a freshman. He majored in history and graduated cum laude in 1955. After graduation, Dick went into the Army as an intelligence officer. Dick and Mae married in December 1956, between semesters of Mae's senior year, while Dick was on leave from the Army. Dick was subsequently stationed in Tokyo, Japan and after graduation, Mae joined Dick and got a job teaching Latin and French at the American School in Japan. So began a lifelong love and study of Japan for both Dick and Mae.

Following his tour of duty in the Army, both Mae and Dick went to the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, MI to pursue their PhDs, Mae in Classics and Dick in Japanese history. They spent several years in the early 60's in Japan doing research for their doctorates. Both Dick and Mae received their doctorates from Michigan in the same ceremony in 1968. They became Assistant Professors at the University of Pittsburgh in 1967. They would spend the next 46 years teaching at the University of Pittsburgh, retiring in 2013.

Dick's specialty was modern Japanese history, and in the final decades of Dick's career, he researched Japanese early 20th-century fiscal policy at The Bank of Japan, focusing on Japan's great finance minister and cosmopolitan banker Korekiyo Takahashi (1854 to 1936). Over the course of his career, Dick wrote three books: *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community* (1974), *Agricultural Development and Tenancy Disputes in Japan, 1870-1940* (1986), and *From Foot Soldier to Finance Minister: Takahashi Korekiyo, Japan's Keynes* (2007).

Mae and Dick lived in the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh for over 50 years. They were renowned entertainers, hosting many friends, family, colleagues and international dignitaries at their house over the years. Dick was an outgoing, gregarious gentleman who happily struck up a conversation with everyone he met. He is sorely missed.

Dick is survived by his brother Bill Smethurst (Ludlow), two nieces, three nephews, six grand-nieces and a grand-nephew. He was preceded in death by his parents Bill and Helen Smethurst and his beloved wife Mae Johnson Smethurst. There will be no visitation. A memorial service will be held Monday, June 17, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. at The Church of the Redeemer, 5700 Forbes Ave. in Squirrel Hill. Arrangements by **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.**

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