

## SIG MOURNS DEATH OF H. ALAN ROBINSON

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**Recently, members of the SIG were saddened to hear of the death of H. Alan Robinson on July 11, 1999. Robinson's obituary appeared in the *New York Times* on July 14, and was written by James M. Shuart, President, and Helene Fortunoff, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Hofstra University. It reads in part:**

Hofstra University is profoundly saddened by the death of H. Alan Robinson, Professor Emeritus of Reading, who passed away on July 11, 1999 after an extended illness. Dr. Robinson, a distinguished member of the Hofstra faculty for 25 years, was Chairperson of the Reading Department. From 1991-1992, he served as Interim Dean of Hofstra's School of Education. Dr. Robinson, a leading expert in the field of reading, received his BS, MS and Ed.D from New York University. A member of the Reading Hall of Fame, he was President of the International Reading Association from 1967-68. A Fellow of the National Conference on Research in English, he served as President from 1971-72. In tribute to the memory of Professor Robinson, all Hofstra University flags have been lowered to half staff.

Robinson was a founding member of the SIG. He was present at the SIG's first organizational meeting in New York on May 3, 1975, at the 21<sup>st</sup> annual convention of the IRA, and he was one of the four speakers at the SIG's first program at Anaheim the following year. (Other speakers included Sam Weintraub and Richard E. Hodges.)

Robinson was interested in the history of literacy instruction throughout his life. He edited *Reading and Writing Instruction in the United States: Historical Trends* (1977), a joint publication of ERIC and the IRA. He began Hofstra University's fine collection of reading textbooks, the Nila Banton Smith Collection. While many assumed that this was based on Smith's own collection, in fact Robinson began from scratch. For additional information see *HRNews*, 20, no. 2 (1997), 6.

Robinson accepted the almost impossible responsibility of updating Nila Banton Smith's *American Reading Instruction* (1986) from 1965, when the IRA published the last edition. A few years later he made a contribution to the history of comprehension instruction by co-authoring another IRA publication, *Reading Comprehension Instruction 1783-1987: A Review of Trends and Research* (1990). Both books were reviewed in the *News*, 11, no. 1 (1987), 1-2 and 14, no. 1 (1990), 5.

SIG members last saw Robinson at their 1996 meeting at New Orleans. He gave an overview of the history of reading instruction. Members may read Robinson's own reminiscences in the *News*, 21, no. 1 (1997), 1-2, 6-7.



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