

Donald R. Kelley, Ph.D. Biography



Donald Reed Kelley - Class of 1949 - b. d. From the EHS Yearbook: Track 1-2; German Club 3-4; Latin Club 1-2; Chemistry Club 2-3-4.

(June, 2017) I liked basketball, track, language courses and math. I had a paper route, worked in watch factory, where my father worked all his life until it collapsed. I got out and went to Harvard ('53), was drafted into the Army and was an MP in Germany to 1955, then onto Columbia University where I received my Ph.D. in 1962.

I taught history at Southern Illinois, Binghamton, Harvard, Rochester, Rutgers, etc., and had fellowships from Guggenheims (2), Institute for Advanced Study (3), Smithsonian, Folger Library, Princeton University, Davis Center, etc. I have written 20 books, 120+ articles, etc. My picture is in some of my books, also in my festschrift,(a book honoring a respected person, especially an academic, and presented during his or her lifetime.) which has further details.

Elected member of American Philosophical Society and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Executive editor of the Journal of the History of Ideas 1985-2005. American Historical Association 2011 Award for Distinguished Scholarship. 1-2-3-4, who are we for?

Now in DRK (in deep retirement)

Donald R. Kelley was born in Elgin, Illinois in 1931 of working-class parents. He worked himself for a time at the Elgin Watch Co., then went to Harvard University (class of 1953). He served in the army as an MP in Germany (1953-55) before going on to graduate school at Columbia University (Ph.D., 1962). Since his undergraduate days his main interest has been European intellectual history, beginning with early modern France, on which he has written several books. He has since extended his research to a larger chronological and international scope, reinforced by a 20-year editorship of the Journal of the History of Ideas and associated international conferences funded by the journal. He has worked in three interrelated areas of study, all touched on in his first book on "language, law, and history in the French Renaissance"; that is, western historical thought and writing; continental law and political thought since antiquity; and the history and role of language. Most recently he has returned to early interests in the history of history, completing a trilogy in western historiography from antiquity to the present and surveys both of intellectual and cultural history. Dr. Kelley has taught at Southern Illinois University, SUNY Binghamton, the University of Rochester, Harvard, and Rutgers University, where he holds the title of James Westfall Thompson Professor of History Emeritus. He has received a number of awards, including a Fulbright and two Guggenheim fellowships and three Institute for Advanced Study fellowships as well as membership in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. He is married to Bonnie Smith, also a historian; they have three children.

Listed in Who's Who in America, 1986-87