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## George Jay Bornstein

By John Whittier-Ferguson

George Bornstein, C.A. Patrides Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, died after sunset on February 2, 2021, at age 79; his wife, Jane Bornstein, was by his side. He was born on August 25th, 1942, son of the late Harry and Celia Bornstein, and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri.

George attended Harvard University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1963. He then attended Princeton University, where he received his doctorate in 1966. Professor Bornstein joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as Associate Professor in 1970 and was promoted to Professor in 1975. He retired from the faculty of the college in 2006.

George was one of the most distinguished and admired scholars of modernism in his generation. For decades, as he devoted himself to the study of the literature and culture of the later nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, his energetic teaching, his tireless advising, his work at conferences, his service to the profession, and his prolific publication of books, articles, and reviews furthered scholars' understanding of an extraordinarily wide range of topics in the field of literary studies. He made the University of Michigan a congenial, challenging, and productive center for students of modernism and of editorial theory. And he continued to expand his interests and his areas of expertise, becoming an important voice for anyone studying nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish and African American culture—whether they were undergraduates, graduate students, colleagues, or distinguished faculty from colleges and universities around the world. His many former students, now teachers and scholars themselves, continue to shape the study of twentieth-century literature, profiting from his training and his example.

In his courses and his publications, George always encouraged his students and his readers to cross intellectual, historical, and methodological boundaries—whether it be to bring Romantic and Modern poets into conversation with one another, to combine editorial theory with incisive interpretive approaches to poetry and prose or, in the last decade or so of his career, to rethink questions of the social and aesthetic constructions of race and ethnicity in the light of a deeply historicized characterization of literature and culture in the first half of the twentieth century. A tireless promoter of modern editorial theory and practice, he was a friend and intellectual collaborator with Hans Walter Gabler and did much to promote the wholesale rethinking of the purposes, the design, and the making of the scholarly edition—a crucial example of which was, of course, Gabler's important and controversial edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. George also wrote with increasing frequency on Irish culture and its complex historical connections with racialized subjects—Blacks, Jews, and Irish people being often bound together at the turn of the twentieth century (in Joyce's texts and in others). George published pioneering explorations of the intricacies of those bindings and helped readers to see the operations of racialized discourses, policies, and practices in the writings of Joyce and a great many other Irish writers, ranging often into the realm of contemporary arts and letters.

George was the author of seven scholarly monographs and the editor of twelve books. He published close to fifty articles, as well as numerous reviews, and he gave talks at conferences, colleges, and universities throughout the United States, Ireland, England, and Germany. In addition to his edited volumes of W. B. Yeats's poetry and prose, which are foundational to anyone working on this seminal poet's oeuvre, George wrote well and widely on an impressive range of subjects, as a selection of his published monographs and edited collections makes clear: *The Colors of Zion: Blacks, Jews, and Irish from 1845 to 1945* (2011); *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (2001); *The Iconic Page in*

*James Joyce Literary Supplement*

*Manuscript, Print and Digital Culture* (1998, edited with Theresa Tinkle); *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities* (1993, edited with Ralph G. Williams); *Poetic Remaking: The Art of Browning, Yeats, and Pound* (1990); *Ezra Pound Among the Poets: Homer, Ovid, Li Po, Dante, Whitman, Browning, Yeats, Williams, Eliot* (1985); *Yeats and Shelley* (1970). He offered distinguished service to the English Department, the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and the University of Michigan, as well as to the profession more generally.

George is survived by his wife, Jane York Bornstein; his three children, Benjamin Bornstein, Rebecca Bornstein, and Dr. Joshua Bornstein; and two granddaughters, Lilya Bornstein Roy and Serena Zhu Bornstein.

—*University of Michigan*