

George C. Schoolfield

1925-2016

George Schoolfield, the witty king of Scandinavian Studies outside of Scandinavia, passed away after a long illness at his home on July 21, 2016. Although 90 at the time of his passing, he ruled a remarkable domain almost to the end of his life. George's service as a contributor and advisory editor to the *Swedish Book Review* goes back to the 1980s and '90s when he published articles, reviews and translations in it. Laurie Thompson had reached out to George, as he did to so many of us, while developing and expanding the *Swedish Book Review*. George's contributions to research in the field of Scandinavian and Germanic Languages cover an astounding range.

He published numerous books, several on German literature, such as *Young Rilke and his Time* and *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature*, but his books on *Elmer Diktonius: Poetry and Politics in Finland*, *Edith Södergran: Modernist Poet in Finland*, *Helsinki and the Czars: Finland's Capital 1808-1908*, and the book he was working on up to his death on Runar Schildt, establish his dominance in the field. He also wrote *A Baedeker of Decadence: Charting a Literary Fashion, 1884-1927*, and edited the nearly 900-page *A History of Finland's Literature*. Yet this prodigious amount of research and publication represented only a modest part of what George did for those of us in Scandinavian Studies. He served as managing editor and review editor of *Scandinavian Studies* from 1969 to 1984. He was knighted by the Finnish Government Order of the White Rose twice and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Helsinki. He also won the Svenska folkskolans vänners Hagforsmedalj in 1996 and in 2000 the Tollanderska prize from the Svenska litteratursällskap.

But all these accomplishments only identify what an extraordinary and multifaceted scholar he was. His humanity, his generosity of spirit, was really what characterized him. While his sometimes acerbic wit suggested the brilliance of his mind, his willingness to share his time and energy with his students and colleagues must be seen as his most admired contribution to our field. He reviewed articles and books being considered for publication; he participated in Scandinavian and German departmental reviews. Indeed, George Schoolfield played a central role in promoting and sustaining studies of Scandinavian languages and literatures for many years. His loss as our leader and advocate will be profoundly felt, but more importantly, besides all of his publications, his legacy of commitment and support to Germanic, Scandinavian, and especially Finnish studies will endure for years to come.

Ross Shideler

