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OBITUARY

Edward A. Allworth (1920–2016)*

Edward Alfred Allworth, Professor Emeritus of Turco-Soviet Studies in the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures at Columbia University and member of the Harriman Institute faculty for over a half-century, died at St. Luke's Hospital in Manhattan on 20 October 2016.

Professor Allworth was founding director at Columbia of both the Program on Soviet Nationality Problems (1970) and the Center for the Study of Central Asia (1984). The Central Eurasia Studies Society had planned to honour Edward Allworth at their conference in November 2016 with the CESS Lifetime Service to the Field Award.


A ground-breaking researcher and connector of scholars, Allworth made his first tour of Soviet Central Asia and Russia in 1957 as one of the early unsponsored American visitors. As a faculty member of Columbia University's Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures, Professor Allworth headed a series of official exchanges between American and Soviet scholars in 1983 and 1985. Later he was invited to the region by the Academy of Sciences in the USSR and the Uzbek and Kazakh Academies to study a variety of subjects in the region, ranging from Central Asian firearms to Uzbek and Kazakh theatre and drama. His own papers (now in the New York Public Library) include extensive and rare collections on Soviet Afghanistan, the Crimean Tatars, Tajikistan and the 'Uzbek Intelligentsia Project'.

Professor Allworth's voluminous writings span nearly six decades, ranging from 'How the Soviets Interpreted the Lines of Two Asian Poets', in *American Slavic and East Europe Review* (16:2, 1957), to a 2015 entry on Tamerlane for the *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*. He is best known for his books *Uzbek Literary Politics* (Mouton, 1964), *Central Asian Publishing and the Rise of Nationalism* (NYPL, 1965), *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule* (Columbia, 1967), *The Nationality Question in Soviet Central Asia* (Praeger, 1973), *Nationality Group Survival in Multiethnic States* (Praeger 1977), *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (Hoover, 1990 [2013]), *The Tatars of Crimea: Return to the Homeland* (2nd ed., Duke, 1998), and *The Preoccupations of 'Abdurauf Fitrat, Bukharan Nonconformist: An Analysis and List of His Writings* (Das Arab. Buch, 2000). He updated his seminal 1967 work with a second (*Central Asia: 120 Years of Russian Rule* [Duke, 1989]) and a third (*Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Rule* [Duke, 1994]) edition. Professor Allworth was editor of the Central Asia Book Series at Duke University Press.

Edward Allworth was born on 1 December 1920, the son of Edward and Ethel (Walker) Allworth. He received his bachelor's degree from Oregon State University, a master's degree from the University of Chicago, and a PhD from Columbia University (1959). After working at both Reed College and the Ford Foundation, Professor Allworth returned to Columbia. His long-standing contribution to Columbia University spanned decades of teaching a wide variety of courses on Central Asian studies, including language, literature, history and politics, and culminated in 1984 when he established a centre at what was then the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures to focus on the study of contemporary Central Asia. Beyond his impressive body of research and scholarly accomplishments, Professor Allworth is widely known for his infectious enthusiasm for Central Asian studies and his dedication to students.

*A version of this obituary was published on the website of Columbia University's Harriman Institute on 25 October 2016.

He mentored dozens of accomplished researchers and scholars from around the world and introduced the rich culture and history of the region to countless more.

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