

Edmund Worthy
(June 12, 1940 – March 27, 2021)

Edmund (Ed) Henry Worthy, Jr. – educator, non-profit leader, and museum executive – died on March 27, 2021 from metastatic cancer. Soon after his birth in Washington, DC, he moved to Philadelphia during World War II and afterwards returned to the Maryland suburbs of Washington where he was raised and educated.

The year before his graduation in 1963 from Yale University with an English major, Ed took a leave of absence to recover from an illness and work as a reporter for *The Washington Daily News*. During this period he received the National Arts and Letters Society's award for expository writing. At Yale he won a prize for the best undergraduate Asian studies essay.

Ed's life took a major turn when the Yale-China Association appointed him in 1963 as one of two fellows from his class to teach English in Hong Kong at New Asia College (now part of the Chinese University of Hong Kong). Since 1901 Yale-China has sent Yale graduates to teach in China and, after 1949, Hong Kong. There Ed began studying Mandarin, and his interest in China deepened. One of his teachers was Huei-ling Chow, whom he married in 1965 in Hong Kong.

In 1966 Ed brought his bride to Princeton University where he started Ph.D. studies in Chinese history and she taught Chinese.

From 1971 to 1974, Ed returned to Hong Kong as director of the Yale-China program and lecturer in the Chinese University's history department. He laid the groundwork for the establishment of the university's International Asian Studies Program for overseas exchange students.

To find time to complete his Ph.D. dissertation, Ed returned to Washington, DC in 1974, earning his degree in the next year. During a brief academic career, he taught at George Washington University as a part-time adjunct professor, published several scholarly articles, and founded a publication that has become a specialized journal in Chinese history. From 1977 to 1979, he was assistant executive director of the American Historical Association.

After 1979 Ed's career shifted from the academic world to adult and continuing education in non-traditional and museum settings, a path he followed until retirement. From 1979 to 1984, he led the National Council on Aging's Division of Life Enrichment. This work involved managing a national continuing education project for 25,000 older adults in senior centers and directing a national policy center on education and volunteerism.

Ed entered the museum world in 1984 when he became Associate Director of The Smithsonian Associates, America's largest museum education program. It annually created and presented 1,000 cultural and education events attended by 100,000 people.

Ed completed his 9-to-5 work life at the National Building Museum where he served as Assistant Director for Education, 1998-2006. Educational programming included lectures by most of the world's leading architects and large family festivals about engineering and the building arts.

Throughout his retirement, Ed derived tremendous satisfaction as a part-time consultant to the ACE Mentor Program of America, a national afterschool mentoring program designed to attract high school students, many from underserved communities, to pursue careers in architecture, construction, and engineering. It annually engages 10,000 students mentored by 4,000 volunteer design and construction professionals.

Ed reveled in his Chinese and Western friends and family, good food, stimulating conversation, travel adventures, listening to jazz music and chorale ensembles, and racquetball which he regularly played almost until his 80th birthday.

He is survived by his wife Huei-ling Chow Worthy, son Brian and daughter-in-law Stephanie Singer, daughter Elaine Worthy Thomas, son-in-law W. David Thomas, and grandchildren Grace Dzo Thomas, and Andrew Worthy Thomas.

A celebratory event for his family and friends will be announced at a future time. Contributions in his memory can be sent to either Yale-China Association, 442 Temple Street, Box 208223, New Haven, CT 06520, or ACE Mentor Program, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.