

Henry Samuel Levinson



GREENSBORO — Henry Samuel Levinson, a philosopher and beloved professor, died at Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro on Monday, January 4 from complications stemming from Multiple Sclerosis. He was 61.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. at Beth David Synagogue on Thursday, January 7 with Rabbi Eliezer Havivi officiating. Burial will follow at the Greensboro Hebrew cemetery.

Levinson was a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for over twenty-five years. During his tenure at UNCG, he served as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Head of the Department of Religious Studies, and Director of the Center for Critical Inquiry in the Liberal Arts. In 1998, UNCG established the Henry Samuel Levinson Program Fund in Jewish Studies, including the Levinson Lecture in Jewish Studies series, in his honor.

UNCG also honored Levinson at HENRYFEST in 2009, which featured a conference celebrating Levinson's contributions as a scholar and teacher. Colleagues and former students from around the country spoke about Levinson's impact on the study of religion in a democratic society and his contributions to Jewish philosophy. They roasted Levinson with brief and humorous anecdotes.

Levinson is the author of three books and numerous articles. His professional honors include serving as the Malcolm L. Diamond Memorial Lecturer at Princeton University in 2002, the William James Lecturer at Harvard University in 2001, and the Henry Samuel Levinson Lecturer in Jewish Studies in 2004.

Before joining the UNCG faculty in 1982, Levinson taught at Stanford and Harvard Universities. He was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford and earned a doctorate from Princeton, where he held the Danforth Graduate Fellowship from 1970-1975. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Levinson is survived by his wife, Catherine Kaplan Levinson, daughters, Molly R. Levinson and husband Joshua Wachs, and Sarah L. Rothman and husband Matthew, father, Joseph E. Levinson, brother, Steven H. Levinson, and two grandchildren, Henry I. and Louisa K. Wachs.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Mimi F. Levinson, brother, Peter Levinson, and sister-in-law, Lynn G. Levinson.

The family will welcome guests at home at 5 p.m., with minyan service following at 5:45 p.m., on Thursday, January 8 and Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday January 10-12.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Action Greensboro to build a play area for children with special needs along the Greensboro Downtown Greenway. Address: 317 South Elm Street, Greensboro, NC 27401.