

Stephen Ambrose (1936-2002)



Stephen E. Ambrose, the author of a best-selling biography of Meriwether Lewis and one of the Foundation's most generous benefactors, died October 13 in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, at age 66. The cause was lung cancer.

Published in 1996 by Simon & Schuster, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* introduced millions of Americans to the story of Lewis and Clark. Ambrose also collaborated with author Dayton Duncan and filmmaker Ken Burns on a National Geographic Society book based on Burns' 1997 PBS documentary *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, another work that helped popularize the L&C saga.

A prolific author best known for his popular histories of World War II, Ambrose was also the author of a two-volume biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the founder of the National D-Day Museum, in New Orleans. In all, he wrote or edited some 35 books. In 1998 he was awarded the National Humanities Medal.

A college professor for most of his adult life, Ambrose retired from the University of New Orleans in 1995 to devote full time to writing, advising on film projects, and various causes, including environmental preservation of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Missouri River. He supported trail stewardship efforts of the LCTHF and for many years provided a subvention to *WPO* that enabled it to increase the number of pages per issue. He also contributed to local L&C projects along the trail and to the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

He was born on January 10, 1936, in Decatur, Illinois, and earned his B.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. He is survived by his wife, Moira; brothers Harry and Bill; children Andrew, Barry, Grace, Hugh, and Stephenie; and five grandchildren.

from *We Proceeded On* 29(1):37 (February 2003)

(Ambrose served on the Board of Directors from 1981 until 1982.)

*Prepared by Bob Gatten, 2011*