

# In Memoriam: Bob Schulzinger

Bob didn't like the heat. And that contributed to his remarkable career and, incidentally, my own modest achievements. In the early-1970s Bob took a position at the University of Arizona. As a native of Cincinnati, educated at Columbia and Yale, he was unprepared for what the Sonoran Desert had in store for him. After sweating it out for one year on the faculty, he decamped for the cooler clime of Colorado, briefly to the University of Denver and ultimately to the University of Colorado at Boulder. He remained there for the rest of his career, a distinguished member of the Department of History, an honored teacher, and longtime director of the university's Center for International Affairs.



And me? Because Bob headed for the Rockies, Arizona had an unanticipated open position in diplomatic history. I got the job. Although a born New Yorker by way of Ann Arbor, I learned to savor the heat, appreciate the desert's charms, and remained in Tucson for the next 50 years. Oh yes, back to Bob. In the summer of 1974, he attended a workshop in Ann Arbor. Once he'd heard I had been hired by Arizona, he reached out and introduced himself to me just days before I moved to Tucson. Boy, did he tell me a lot about what was in store for me! It was, I like to think, the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Over the next half century, Bob remained one of my closest personal and professional friends, a collaborator on several writing projects, a traveling companion to exotic research and conference venues (imagine, if you will, Bob tramping

along the Great Wall of China in exuberant spirits), and an example of how superb research, writing, and teaching coalesced in one individual. I had it from an unimpeachable source – my son – who took several classes from Bob at CU, that students in his diplomatic history and Vietnam war classes were riveted by his wit, wisdom, and insights into the arcane workings of the American government, the policy making bureaucracy, and the military. He knew precisely how to balance playfulness and seriousness in his presentations. I observed Bob's classroom magic myself, when he was a visiting faculty member one semester in Arizona in the 1990s (during the winter term!) and one semester in 2004 while I was a visiting

professor in Boulder. His final major monographs, on the origins, conduct, and legacies of the Vietnam War were a superb blend of domestic and international history.

Bob was exceedingly generous with students and colleagues and always open to reading and critiquing the work of other historians. Our collaboration on a pair of U.S. history survey textbooks revealed how much he knew about the field and how he understood both what to say and not to say in order to persuasively communicate ideas. In his personal life, Bob was a loving husband, a devoted father, a proud grandparent, and always a great companion. He embodied the fullness of the Yiddish term *Mensch*—someone whose whole person embodied goodness and integrity.

*Michael Schaller*



When I met Bob in January 1987, I did not realize that we were starting a continuing conversation that only stopped in the days before his untimely passing. I was a graduate student at Yale studying with Gaddis Smith, and Bob was a Visiting Professor, teaching Diplomatic History, while Gaddis (his former advisor), was on sabbatical. We had professional topics, Yale graduate school and Columbia undergraduate reminiscences in common. One of Bob's best stories, and every story Bob told was hilarious because of his skill as a raconteur, concerned the swimming test which every Columbia undergraduate had to pass in the years he attended. Bob passed easily, but his roommate never received his Columbia degree because he failed the swimming test.

That swimming test was just one of the many challenges Bob mastered with an ease and grace that is hard to convey. He had Arthrogryposis (AMC), a congenital issue which affects multiple joints prior to birth, causing them to be permanently bent or, alternatively, locked straight into place. In 1945, when Bob was born, children with such birth issues were not mainstreamed but relegated to special schools, as Bob himself was for several years. Indeed, some parents were advised not to bring children with AMC or similar congenital conditions home from the hospital, but to institutionalize them immediately. Because AMC was such a rare condition, doctors during the 1950s tried novel treatments on Bob, some of which were painful, all of which were uncomfortable. In my work as Executive Director of the Center for Adoption Policy, I speak with parents who adopt children with special needs, including AMC. Today, children with this condition have specialized surgery much earlier and have excellent outcomes, in part due to the techniques that were developed during Bob's childhood, and first used on him.

But with total determination, and the support of parents who believed that Bob deserved the same opportunities that his sisters had, Bob surmounted each and every obstacle. His was a childhood when physically challenged children, burdened with the tyranny of low expectations, grew up with little or no provision made in public or private venues for those who could not easily walk up or down stairs, or move at the pace New Yorkers or New Havenites did. Bob and I both made trips to China in 1996; he for professional reasons, me to adopt my first daughter. When we returned, Bob pointed out that there were no physically challenged people visible in China and noted that such had been the case in the United States when he was a boy. The extensive progress represented by the Americans for Disabilities Act and later legislation is only one of the reasons, I think, for Bob's eternal optimism, which never failed him.

Bob graduated at the top of his class in high school, and was his school's representative to Boys State, where he won the teen delegates' popular vote to become Ohio's representative to Boys Nation. The fifty state winners traveled to Washington; a visit to the White House was the grand finale. One of Bob's fellow Boys Nation attendees that year was Bill Clinton, who got his first glimpse of his later home, and, according to Bob, was politicking even then.

As SHAFR members know, Bob was a brilliant historian, a spell binding lecturer and a wonderful writer. His books remain standard reading in campuses across the country. My daughter Sarah and I visited Bob several years ago and had some great conversations about history and other subjects. But because he was just "Bob," it was only after he died that she realized that Bob was the Robert Schulzinger whose books remain required reading at Penn.

Bob was always generous with his time, to his students, colleagues, and friends. He was never too busy to read a manuscript, brainstorm an idea or comment on an outline. Working on an edited volume with him was a pleasure because of his encyclopedic knowledge and acute sensibility, leavened by his unfailing sense of humor.

Bob will be so greatly missed, first and foremost by his wife Marie, and his daughter Elizabeth, to whom he was devoted. But also, by all of us who were fortunate to call ourselves friends of Bob. May his memory be a blessing.

*Diane B. Kunz*



I didn't know Bob quite as long as Diane and Michael did, but our time did extend back thirty-three years. Little did I know that when I met him in June 1989 at my first SHAFR conference, at the College of William and Mary, Bob would change my life and give me a career opportunity of my lifetime. To me, Bob was all energy, super-smart, with a sense of humor that could make you nearly hysterical, irascible in his unique Schulzingerian way, and deep down, a man with a big heart who could be tough, impatient, and lovable all at the same time. I missed him when a stroke forced him into retirement over a decade ago, and I miss him even more now that he is gone.

I was finishing my dissertation when I accompanied my advisor, Steve Pelz, to Williamsburg for the SHAFR conference. Sitting at a table next to this older professor (they all seemed old to me back then), this guy welcomed me, asked I where I was from, what I researched on, what I thought of everything from the food to the weather, had amusing things to say—in short, the first but not last, typical Bob Schulzinger treatment. What I mean by that is Bob was a truly curious person who loved meeting people; he'd sound them out and either they liked him (most of them did) or they were stunned into shyness! But you were never going to sit there quietly around Bob, who'd make sure to hear from you before he held forth. And man, could he give his views of things, sometimes dismissing yours, oftentimes listening quickly and absorbing. He was no shrinking violet in terms of expressing himself—he was truly entertaining to be around—and that's what I loved about him.

Bob tracked me down a few months later, asking if I'd want to replace him in Boulder in Spring 1990 because he was taking a semester at the University of Arizona. We moved, even into his house; he rented it to us for \$200/month—when I asked him if that was a good deal, he replied, "buddy, you need to stop asking questions and accept the offer." I can just hear him nearly scolding me!). When the Schulzingers returned from Tucson in May, I sat their baby daughter in a big packing box to quiet her down, cleaned the house, and left Boulder for good—at least I thought. But Bob worked with the department to offer me an instructorship that lasted not only into the next Fall (and CU's national football championship) but for two more years, which then merged into a tenure-line position that I hold today. All the while, I had the simply great fortune to have Bob as a mentor and friend.

Bob went on, in the mid-1990s, to chair the Program in International Affairs, a post he held for twelve years at a time when the major expanded from 400 students to well beyond 1000 into the next century. At the same time he guided this complex program, he kept up his vigorous research agenda, resulting in numerous publications. And he taught a full load of courses at every level, most memorable being the huge diplomatic history and US since 1968 lectures. In these, he fielded questions from students. Did I mention irascible?

Bob welcomed—truly asked for—questions from students, but woe to the ones that he deemed not up to snuff. There are no stupid questions, we say, but of course, that's wrong. Yes, there are, and Bob might tell a student that her comment was "silly" or another one that he was off base. But never in a demeaning way, rather, only to make a point about thinking before speaking. Even these victims of his sharp wit ended up appreciating him, and many simply adored his lecture style. They even came to office hours, seeking advice.

Bob was, to me, just such a one-of-a-kind person. Sure, he had the disability. But I didn't notice it in class or at conferences when he was speaking. I didn't notice it when you read his detailed monographs and sweeping survey texts. I did notice it at the rec center when he swam laps—yes, he regularly dropped into the pool to exercise! What I also noticed is that Bob gave every ounce of energy, intelligence, wit, dedication, and care to running the International Affairs program, advising students, and contributing to the University on myriad committees. He was so impressive that he was named one of the first College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professors, an award that followed on the heels of many others, including

the presidency of SHAFR, a position he was so honored to hold and an organization he deeply loved.

I will always be indebted to him for providing me with a job and having confidence in me. I was so lucky to see him twice before he passed away, when he was resting at home. In his last word to me, he told me, though with a groggy voice: "Tom, I had a great life." He did, and in the process, made other lives great as well.



*Tom Zeiler*

The recent death of Bob Schulzinger is extremely sad for his many SHAFR friends, who all remember his encyclopedic knowledge of history, work ethic, and determination to overcome obstacles. Bob was my Ph.D. advisor back in the 1990s, and as his research assistant it was my great privilege to spend a lot of time with him outside of the halls of academia. We attended several sporting events, including Rockies baseball games and Colorado Buffalo basketball games. Those outings gave me additional insight into Bob's intellectual curiosity and treated me to his rapier sharp wit.

He provided me wonderful support as an advisor throughout the process of completing my dissertation and later during my search for a job. Although he had worked hard to help me get an interview to work in the State Department's office of the historian, he graciously applauded my decision to instead take a teaching job at a community college.

Some of his advice as my teacher for two seminars that has stayed with me all these years includes his emphasis on the importance of a good title and his insistence that we strive for concise writing. Overly verbose papers were described by Bob as "Beaver History," because they included "one dam thing after another." One of my goals as a teacher has been to pass on these points of emphasis to my students.

Thanks, Bob, for being a great teacher and advisor!



*Andy DeRoche*