Obituary

Steven Béla Várdy (1935 – 2018)

Béla Várdy, a.k.a. Steven B. Várdy, was Professor of History and McAnulty Distinguished Professor of History at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He was born in Bercel, Nógrád County, in what is now northern Hungary — and came to the United States with his parents in 1951. He received his education in his native country, in Germany and in the United States — where he earned a doctoral degree at Indiana University. He taught at Duquesne University for five decades. For some time he acted as chairman of his department and was one of the most prolific of its members. A selective list of his publications in English alone fills more than 30 pages (see Richard Mulcahy, ed. Hungary Through the Centuries: Studies in Honor of Professors Steven Béla Várdy and Agnes Huszár Várdy, [Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2011, pp. 563-594]. One of the most widely used of Dr. Várdy’s books is probably his Historical Dictionary of Hungary (Lanham, Md.: the Scarecrow Press, 1997, 812 pages). According to the website worldcat.org Várdy’s books — at least one of them — can be found in close to 4,000 libraries worldwide. More than a dozen of Várdy’s publications have appeared over the decades in our journal — some of them co-written with his wife Agnes Huszár Várdy, who taught at Pittsburgh’s Robert Morris College (later University).

What made Professor Várdy different from many other Hungarian university teachers who lived and taught in the United States was the emphasis he placed on ties to his native land. Throughout his professional career he regularly visited Hungary, cultivated scholarly contacts there, and kept publishing in the Magyar language. Even his magnum opus appeared there: Magyarok az Újvilágban — Hungarians in the New World (Budapest: A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága, 2000, 840 pages). He often declared his wish that, after his
death, he would like to rest in Hungarian soil. His wish was granted. He died, after a long struggle with diseases of old age, in July, 2018, a few days after he returned to his native land for the last time. With his passing, our journal lost one of its most productive contributors.