
Dr. Herbert C. Youtie: Atlantic City's Unrecognized Great Scholar

Sonny on Sunday

by *Sonny Schwartz*

Originally published 3/9/1980 in The Press of Atlantic City, South Jersey Living section

All through his four years at Atlantic City High School, Dr. Herbert C. Youtie was a quiet, studious, intense young man.

But probably not one of his high school teachers of more than 60 years ago could have ever imagined that the scholarly Youtie would go on to be internationally recognized as one of the foremost papyrologists in the world.

Papyrology is the study of ancient Egyptian documents written on papyrus.

Youtie, who died recently, left Atlantic City shortly after his graduation from Atlantic High. His brother, Dr. Ben Youtie, remains an Atlantic City resident.

Professor Youtie is just one of the countless Atlantic City High School graduates who went on to achieve international fame.

But as is the case with so many other renowned Atlantic High alumni who departed from the area to attain their successful niche, their subsequent fame goes virtually unrecognized and unheralded in their native community.

Yet as an acknowledged authority in papyrology, Youtie etched an indelible

mark in academic, professional and historical circles throughout the world.

And his background is filled with distinctions and honors earned over a career spanning more than half a century.

Born in Atlantic City on Aug. 28, 1904, Youtie received his Master's Degree from Columbia University in 1928.

He later studied at L'Institut Catholique de Paris.

In 1929, Youtie arrived at the University of Michigan where he began his work in the field of papyrology.

Retained originally as a research assistant in papyrology at the university's Museum of Art and Architecture, Youtie maintained that position for seven years.

From 1930 to 1938, he was instructor in Greek, later being promoted to assistant professor in 1938, and associate professor in 1944.

In 1948 – 19 years after his arrival at Michigan – Youtie was named research professor of papyrology.

He retired from that post in 1975 at

the age of 70, but until his recent death, continued to live with his wife, Louise, in the Michigan campus atmosphere of Ann Arbor.

In his more than 50 years of affiliation with the university and its' library, Youtie received two of the highest honors bestowed by the university.

In 1962 he was named Henry Russell lecturer and in 1974 he won the prestigious Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award.

He was awarded an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Cologne, Germany in 1969, an honor rarely accorded a non-German citizen.

During his career, Youtie published more than 110 works and lectured at the Universities of London and Brussels, Oxford University and Harvard University.

He was a member of the distinguished American Philosophical Society, the British Academy and the American Society of Papyrology.

Youtie was an honorary member of the Hellenic Society of London, England.

In a tribute to Youtie following his death, the University of Michigan Library publicly mourned his passing.

Under Dr. Youtie's expertise and leadership, library officials said, the library had amassed a world-famous collection of papyri.

"He (Dr. Youtie) was internationally honored as one of the foremost papyrologists in the world, with a long list of publications to his credit and with degrees from Paris and Cologne, but to many of us he was also a dear and valued friend" the library tribute stated.

"We shall remember him not only for his professional competence, but also for his brilliant conversation, his wise counsel, his unflinching courtesy and his great kindness."

A library spokesperson said that Youtie's widow would continue the work she shared with her husband for more than 40 years.

Which, the spokesperson noted, is appropriate indeed in honoring the memory, and legacy, of this unassuming, intellectually-gifted Atlantic City High School Graduate.