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Ross Scaife (1960-2008)

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Abstract

This is a biographical sketch of Ross Scaife (1960-2008), who was Professor of Classics at the University of Kentucky and founding editor of the Stoa Consortium for Electronic Publication in the Humanities.

Allen Ross Scaife, 47, Professor of Classics at the University of Kentucky and founding editor of the Stoa Consortium for Electronic Publication in the Humanities, died of cancer on March 15, 2008 at his home in Lexington, Kentucky.

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Figure 1. Photo of Ross Scaife taken in January 2007

Ross was born in Fredericksburg, VA on March 31, 1960. He graduated from the Tilton School in Tilton, New Hampshire in 1978 and from the College of William and Mary in 1982 with a major in Classics and Philosophy. He earned a PhD in 1990 in Classical Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1988 he participated in the summer program at the American Academy in Rome, and in 1985 was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for a year of study at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece.

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From 1991 to the time of his death, Ross was on the faculty at the University of Kentucky in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literature, and Cultures where he taught courses on women in the ancient world, Greek art, Aristophanes, and the Greek historians, as well as Greek and Latin language courses.

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A pioneer in using computer technology to advance scholarship in the humanities, Ross is perhaps best known as the founding editor of the Stoa Consortium for Electronic Publication in the Humanities. The Stoa, established in 1997, set the standard for Open Access publication of digital humanities work in the classics, serving as an umbrella project for many diverse projects that provide functionality, and have requirements, not supported by traditional (print) publishers. In addition to providing Open Access publication for the work of other scholars, Ross strived to make his own work (and the raw materials behind that work) available freely to others. He was the co-creator of *Diotima: Materials for the Study of Women and Gender in the Ancient World* and of the *Neo-Latin Colloquia* collection, both of which are published on The Stoa.

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According to his principled belief in Open Access, Ross was always a stern critic of models of scholarship that were needlessly exclusionary in their presentation or implementation. He firmly believed in the potential afforded by technology to bring the highest levels of scholarship to the widest possible audience, and in the obligation of learned societies to make their work freely available to all interested readers.

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Ross's influence is most noticeable in his long-standing belief in the power of collaborative work. With humor, generosity, and a keen editor's discretion, he worked throughout his career to build working relationships among an international circle of collaborators, for his own projects, as well as for others. As a founding editor of the Suda On Line, a web accessible database for work on Byzantine Greek lexicography, Ross helped to build a framework that allowed a large number of people to work together on a single edition. SOL was founded in 1998 at a time when such large-scale collaborative editing was rare, if not unheard of. The influence of the SOL is still being felt as the next generation of collaborative editing tools are being developed. Ross had long-term associations with Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, the Perseus Project, and more recently with the Digital Classicist. Those who knew him will remember him for his generosity and willingness to offer advice, and for his ability to see connections and build bridges between projects and people.

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Most recently, Ross was instrumental in forging the collaboration that resulted in the high resolution digital imaging of the Venetus A, a 10th century manuscript of the *Iliad* located at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, and was a co-Principal Investigator of project EDUCE, which aims to use non-invasive, volumetric scanning technologies for virtually "unwrapping" and visualizing ancient papyrus scrolls. Since July, 2005 Ross has been the director of the Collaboratory for Research in Computing for Humanities, a research unit at the University of Kentucky which provides technical assistance to faculty who wish to undertake humanities computing projects, and to encourage and support interdisciplinary partnerships between faculty at UKY and researchers around the world.

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His many interests included sailing in the Northern Neck of Virginia, hunting, cooking, woodworking, and photography.

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Ross was the proud father of three sons, Lincoln (16), Adrian (13), and Russell (9). In addition, Ross is survived by his wife, Cathy Edwards Scaife, his parents, William and Sylvia Scaife, and three siblings, Bill Scaife, Susan Duerksen, and John Scaife, as well as their spouses and children.

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This biography was originally published at Stoa, <http://www.stoa.org/?p=786>. Comments in memoriam may be added there.

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