

**In Memoriam**  
**Edwin Scott Gaustad**  
**Professor of History, *Emeritus***  
**UC Riverside**  
**November 14, 1923 – March 25, 2011**



Dr. Edwin Scott Gaustad, Professor of History Emeritus at UC Riverside (UCR) passed away on March 25, 2011, in Santa Fe, NM, at age 87.

Dr. Gaustad was born in Rowley, Iowa on November 14, 1923, but grew up in Houston, Texas. During the Second World War he served as a 1st Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps and then from 1943-1945, served in Italy as a bombardier and navigator on over 30 missions. Dr. Gaustad graduated from Baylor University in 1947 with a BA in history. In 1951, he went on to complete a PhD in religious studies, with a focus on the history of religions, at Brown University. There he studied under Edmund Morgan, a historian of colonial America. Dr. Gaustad taught at Brown, Shorter College and University of Redlands, before joining the faculty of the Department of History at UCR in 1965. He remained at UCR until his retirement in 1989. Dr. Gaustad also was a Visiting Professor at Baylor (1978), University of Richmond (1987), Princeton Seminary (1991–92), and Auburn University (1993).

Dr. Gaustad's first book was *The Great Awakening in New England*, published in 1957. A running theme in Gaustad's scholarship was religious dissent in America. Touching on this subject, Dr. Gaustad wrote several biographies on significant figures including Roger Williams, George Berkeley, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. He also wrote several histories of religion in America, including *Dissent in American Religion* (1973), *Faith of Our Fathers: Religion and the New Nation* (1987), and *A Religious History of America* (2002). One of his most impressive projects was the *Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, published in 1962, 1976, and again in 2001.

In addition to his academic labors, Dr. Gaustad was politically active. He served as an expert witness in the landmark libel case *Lee v. Duddy* and publicly opposing the constitutional amendment to permit forms of government-sponsored prayer and tax-financed religious activities. Dr. Gaustad also served as

an expert witness in 2002 for the Federal court case *Glassroth v. Moore*, which concerned the placement of a stone Ten Commandments monument in a rotunda of the Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building in Montgomery, Alabama. He testified on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups against an Alabama judge who refused to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments from the state courthouse. When an attorney asked who Jefferson was referring to when he wrote that liberties are a gift from God, Gaustad said, "The God of nature," which is "the God we see around us," the Associated Press reported in 2002. "Not the God of the Bible?" he was asked. "Not for Jefferson," Gaustad replied.

At UCR, Dr. Gaustad was instrumental in the establishment of religious studies as an academic unit on campus. He received the Distinguished Teaching Award at UCR for his excellence in teaching about religion and history in the United States. He also served as president of the American Society of Church History and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Speakers Panel. He received distinguished alumni awards at both Baylor and Brown universities, and the Alumni Religious Liberty Award from Baylor. A scholarship in his honor is awarded annually to a UCR senior in religious studies who plans to pursue graduate studies in religion.

Dr. Gaustad is survived by his daughters, Susan and Peggy; his son, Scott; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. He was predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Helen.

Prepared from excerpts written by Valerie J. Nelson for the *Los Angeles Times*, and UCR Chancellor Timothy White. Edited by Paul Nabity and Katja M. Guenther.

Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\\_Gaustad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Gaustad)

<http://philosophyofscienceportal.blogspot.com/2011/04/deceased-edwin-gaustad.html>