



Maurice Friedberg
(1929–2014)

In Memoriam

Maurice Friedberg, an alumnus of the Russian Institute Class of 1953, who went on to become a distinguished scholar in the field of Russian and Soviet literature, died on August 15, 2014, in Washington, D.C., at the age of 84. Maurice was born in Poland ten years before the Nazi invasion. He escaped with his family, making their way to America. He graduated from Brooklyn College and at Columbia received the Certificate of the Russian Institute along with his M.A. in Slavic languages and Ph.D. in 1958.

During his academic career he taught at Brooklyn College, Hunter College, Columbia, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Indiana University, where he was director of the Russian and East European Institute (1966–75), and the University of Illinois, where he chaired the Department of Slavic Languages from 1975 until his retirement in 2000. Maurice was an active member of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) and a frequent chair, panelist, and discussant at its regional and national conferences. His honors include Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships.

He was the author of several books, including *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets*, *A Decade of Euphoria*, *Russian Culture in the 1980s*, *How Things Were Done in Odessa*, and *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History*.

Maurice and I were not only colleagues in the field of Soviet studies but also close personal friends. Together with my wife Gloria, also an M.A. in Russian from Columbia, we celebrated his wedding to Barbara Bisguier in the mid-1950s and kept in touch over the years, enjoying the growth of their lovely daughters Rachel and Edna, who have succeeded in their careers: Rachel, as a professor at Brown University, and Edna, as a staff member of the Holocaust Museum in

Washington. They delighted their parents with five grandchildren.

Maurice's energies were not limited to his professional responsibilities. He played a significant part during the Cold War, with frequent broadcasts in Russian to the Soviet Union over Voice of America and Radio Liberty. As a director of programming at Radio Liberty, I called on him for help in planning a special series aimed at Soviet Jewish listeners about their religion and culture, which the hostile regime opposed and repressed. We learned later from émigrés in the West that they appreciated this lifeline to their heritage of Judaism.

He was a person of great warmth and compassion and possessed a wonderful sense of humor. A skillful raconteur, he would regale his audiences with a seemingly inexhaustible flow of Soviet *anekdoty*, that is, uncensored jokes with barbed political meaning that Russians told each other, risking arrest by the secret police for spreading anti-Soviet propaganda. For example: "A fellow gets up one morning in his dingy room in Moscow and discovers that his beautiful pet parrot is missing. In a panic, he grabs the phone and calls KGB headquarters to assure them that 'I do NOT share his opinions!'"

In Maurice's years of retirement he contributed a detailed video interview describing his life story to the oral history archive of the Holocaust Museum. (The video and transcript can be accessed on the museum's website: collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn38082.) It is the thoughtful and moving memoir of a unique and beloved *chelovek*.

—Gene Sosin, B.A. '41, M.A. '49,
Certificate of Russian Institute '49, Ph.D. '58



George Louis Kline
(1921–2014)

George Louis Kline, Milton C. Nahm Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College, died at the age of 93 in Anderson, South Carolina, on October 21, 2014, six months after the death of his beloved wife Virginia (“Ginny”).

After military service as a navigator/bombardier during World War II, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Kline matriculated at Columbia University and went on to earn three degrees there—B.A. 1947, M.A. 1948, and Ph.D. 1950—all with a concentration in philosophy. His early teaching was also primarily at Columbia, where he taught from 1950 to 1959 (with the exception of one year as visiting professor at the University of Chicago), before accepting his position at Bryn Mawr.

Although Kline published widely on major figures in world philosophy, such as Spinoza, Hegel, and Whitehead, and served terms as president of both the Hegel Society of America and the Metaphysical Society of America, he is best known to Slavists not only as the American scholar who smuggled verses by his Russian friend, the future Nobel Prize-winning poet Joseph Brodsky, out of the Soviet Union and translated them into English, but above all as the founder and acknowledged dean of the scholarly specialty of Russian philosophy in the United States.

Beginning with his doctoral dissertation, published as *Spinoza in Soviet Philosophy* in 1952, followed by his English translation in 1953 of the authoritative two-volume *History of Russian Philosophy* by V. V. Zenkovsky, and continuing with his influential study *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (1968) and a wealth of other books and articles (more than 300 in all), Kline alerted generations of students and general readers of English to the availability and merits of a body

of philosophical reflection that few had known existed.

Ironically, Kline’s single most influential publication is one for which he never received full recognition. He was the de facto but unidentified editor in chief of the three-volume anthology *Russian Philosophy* (1965), which has now been continuously in print and used in university courses for fifty years. He recommended the volume’s structure and the readings to be included, translated some of them himself, and guided the preparation of the introductions and commentaries at every stage. But he refused to be listed even as a coeditor, accepting mention only as “collaborator,” because he wanted the three younger scholars involved (who included the undersigned) to have the credit of editorship—a gesture emblematic of the remarkable lifelong generosity Kline displayed toward his students and younger colleagues. He is sorely missed.

—James P. Scanlan, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, The Ohio State University