

In Memoriam

Thomas D. Clark

Thomas Dionysius Clark, 101, a longtime professor and chair of the University of Kentucky history department and a prolific author of Kentucky history, died June 28 at the Mayfair Village Retirement Center in Lexington and private burial services were held in the Lexington Cemetery.

Clark, whom former Gov. Brereton Jones called "Kentucky's greatest treasure," died two weeks short of his 102nd birthday July 14.

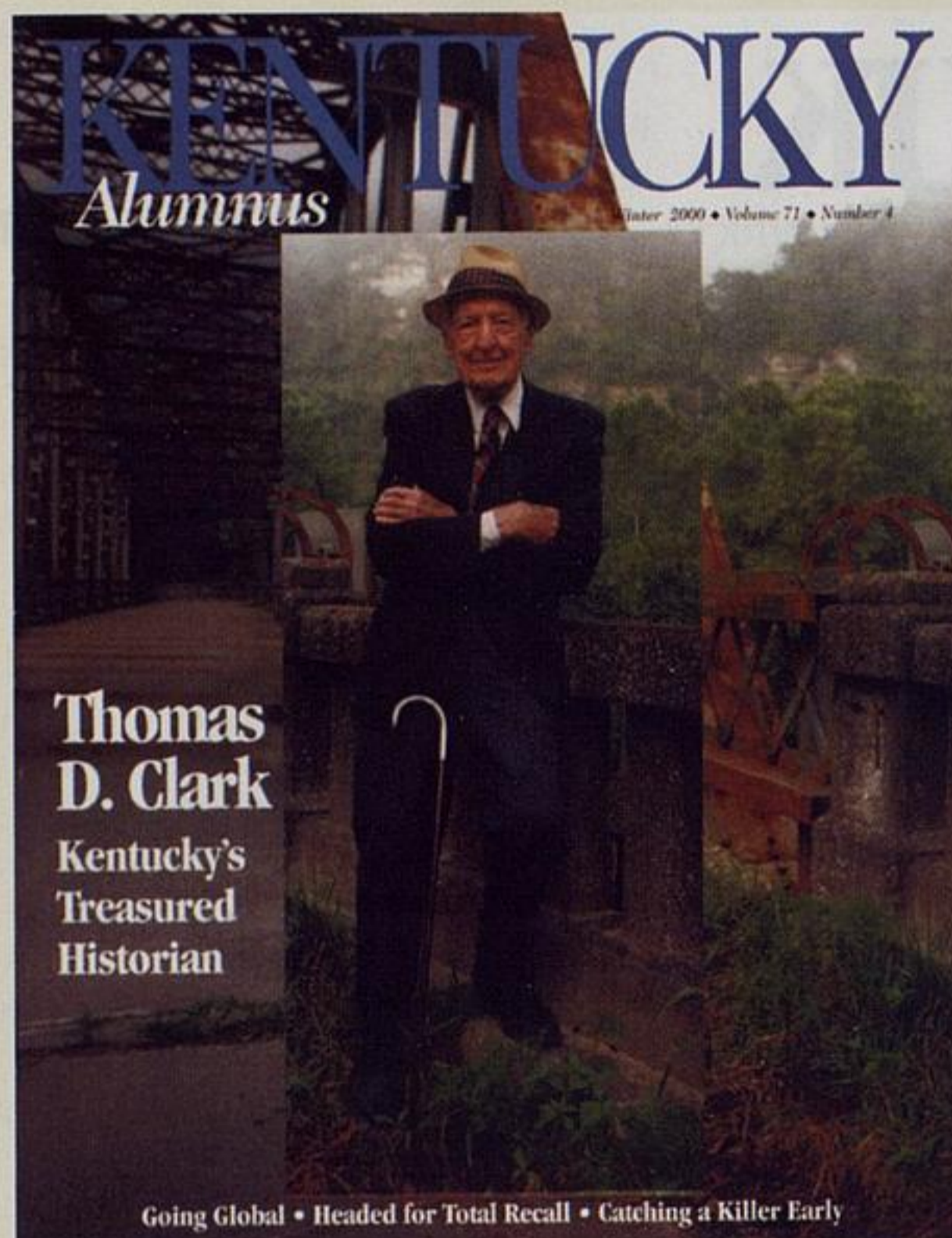
Born in Louisville, Miss., Clark was the son of John Collingsworth Clark and Sallie Bennett Clark. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1928 from the University of Mississippi, a master's in 1929 from UK and a doctorate in history from Duke University in 1932.

He taught history at UK for 37 years, chairing the department from 1942 to 1965. It is estimated Clark taught more than 20,000 students during his teaching career which included five years as a Distinguished Professor of History at Indiana University after he retired from UK. He also served as a visiting professor of history at Harvard, Duke, North Carolina, Tennessee, Louisville, Wyoming, Chicago, Wisconsin, Washington State and Stanford. He was a guest lecturer at Oxford and in several foreign countries including Greece, Yugoslavia and India.

He used most of his prolific history writing skills for Kentucky, publishing volume upon volume of books about the Commonwealth including "Exploring Kentucky," used as a textbook in the public schools. Clark's account of the history of a Southern country store published in 1944 under the title "Pills, Petticoats and Plows," is one of his popular early books. In all, he wrote more than 30 books on the American South, the Westward Movement and Kentucky.

As recently as 2002, when he was 99 years old, the University Press of Kentucky, which is housed in a building that bears Clark's name on the UK campus, published a Clark coauthored book titled "The People's House: Governor's Mansions of Kentucky."

Clark helped establish the University of Kentucky



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Press in 1943, and two decades later he was instrumental in founding the University Press of Kentucky, a state-wide consortium that includes most of Kentucky's regional universities and private colleges and which published many of Clark's works. Clark served on the Press's board.

In 1990, the Kentucky General Assembly honored Clark by declaring him Kentucky's Historian Laureate. This March the Kentucky General Assembly voted to rename the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort for Clark, who helped raise funds for the 167,000-square-foot facility.

Clark received many other honors, including the presidencies of both the Southern Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa and

Phi Alpha Theta honor society in history.

"Dr. Clark taught with passion and vision, constantly sought new knowledge, and challenged the Commonwealth to remember its history," said UK President Lee T. Todd Jr. "One of his greatest legacies is that he continually challenged our leaders to strive for greatness in education as well, because he understood what it would mean for the future of our state and our children. Tom Clark, an adopted son of Kentucky, will be deeply missed but never forgotten."

Clark is survived by his wife, Loretta Gilliam Clark. His marriage of 62 years to Elizabeth Turner Clark ended with her death in 1995. Other survivors are a son, Thomas Bennett Clark of Lexington; a daughter, Elizabeth Clark Stone of Bowling Green; a brother, Ernest Clark of Dallas, Texas; two sisters, Wilma Sanders and Ethel Atkinson, both of Louisville, Miss.; three grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

The family suggests that memorial contributions to honor Clark be given to the Thomas D. Clark Kentucky Center for History, 100 West Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601, or to the Lexington History Museum, 215 West Main St., Lexington, KY 40507.

— Ralph Derickson