

John Drenan "Drenan" Kelley

Birth: Oct. 4, 1917
 Irasburg
 Orleans County
 Vermont, USA

Death: Dec. 19, 2005
 Athens
 Clarke County
 Georgia, USA



Cemetery Photo
 Added by: [Helen](#)

J. Drenan Kelley was the second of two children born of parents Rev. Charles Wesley Kelley, Sr. (1872-1947) and Grace Jewett Collins Kelley (1884-1973), and the younger brother of Charles Wesley Kelley, Jr. (1915-2003). He grew up in Vermont and New Hampshire the son of a Methodist minister, moving every three years as required by the New England Methodist Church Conference. He was educated at Tilton School in Tilton, New Hampshire. He attained a degree in accounting from a college in Laconia, NH. When his father preached in Concord, NH, Drenan (John D. Kelley) enlisted in the U.S. Army 5 Dec 1940 at the age of 23 in the Coast Artillery Corps as a Private but was advanced to the rank of Master Sargent. Because of the tuition program offered to veterans, Drenan obtained an MBA from Harvard after the war--a college he would never been able to afford on a minister's son's salary. He decided to further his career in Sociology after studying the subject at Harvard with a well-known professor. His father died in 1947, so he and his mother lived in Belmont, MA during his student life at Harvard.



Master Sargent John D. Kelley U.S.
 Army World War II
 - [Kitty Kelley, Ph.D.](#)

Added: Jan. 25, 2014

In 1950, he married Delores Myrtle Ritter while he was studying at the University of Minnesota for a Master's Degree in Sociology and she was a nursing student nearby. No children came from the marriage. After he obtained a doctorate from a university in Louisiana, he moved to Athens, GA to begin a teaching career as a professor of Sociology at the University of Georgia. He continued at that university until his retirement. He made one trip overseas as a civilian to Ireland and the Isle of Man to seek records of ancestors. Otherwise, he and his wife lived a happy but quiet life in Georgia. He served as secretary of the Society of Sociologists for a time and enjoyed mentoring Ph.D. students as they worked through the doctoral program at UGA. He was a wonderful and supportive uncle to his niece (Kitty Kelley) and great nephew,

her son Jeffrey Bailey. He died of cancer on 19 Dec 2005 and was buried 22 Dec 2005 at Oconee Hills Cemetery near the University where he spent so many happy years teaching.

Burial:

[Oconee Hill Cemetery](#)

Athens

Clarke County

Georgia, USA

Created by: [Kitty Kelley, Ph.D.](#)

Record added: Jan 25, 2014

Find A Grave Memorial# 124114091

Drenan Kelley (1917-2005)

Drenan Kelley, 88, a retired member of the sociology faculty of the University of Georgia, died in Athens on December 19th, 2005. Drenan was hired by Georgia in 1963 by then department head, Fred Bates, to teach sociological theory to the first cohorts of graduate students in the new graduate program in Athens. Along with Ira Robinson, Drenan was one of the department's two primary theory instructors in those early years; he filled this role admirably and with extraordinary effectiveness until his retirement in 1982. Drenan was very knowledgeable of the history of German social thought, particularly the ideas of lesser-known figures such as Leopold von Wiese and Ludwig Gumplowicz. A particularly distinctive aspect of Drenan's theory course, however, was its emphasis on the continued relevance of the Scottish moralists, whom he considered to be precursors of modern social theory, including functionalism, conflict theory, and even symbolic interactionism. Among the Georgia students who studied theory with Drenan were Catherine T. Harris and Jacqueline M. Boles, who went on to notable careers in sociology at Wake Forest and Georgia State universities.

Although Drenan spent most of his academic life in the South, he was born a New Englander, continuing signs of which were clearly evident in his distinctive speaking accent, a distilled brew of Vermont, Louisiana, Georgia and, of course, Harvard, where Drenan studied as an undergraduate following his discharge from the U.S. Army in 1946. Because of his gentle, scholarly demeanor, one might not have thought of Drenan as a soldier but his military service during WWII was long and exemplary. He entered the Army in 1940 and rose to the rank of Master Sergeant by war's end, having taken part in military campaigns in Sicily, Naples, Foggia, and Rome-Arno. Upon his discharge, Drenan entered Harvard and, in 1950, graduated Magna cum laude. Following a period of teaching, Drenan returned to school to earn the M.A. degree at Minnesota in 1957 and the Ph.D. at Louisiana State University in 1961, completing a dissertation

under the direction of Rudolf Heberle on Weber's theory of stratification.

For those of us who came to know Drenan later in his career, we remember an extraordinarily kind and dedicated departmental citizen, one who was invariably professional in his dealings with students and colleagues alike. He served conscientiously as the department's undergraduate coordinator for many years, and his reliable understanding of the complexities of Roberts' Rules earned him the respected title of departmental parliamentarian. Finally, one must also recognize Drenan's contributions to the organizational development of sociology in Georgia. Drenan was a key figure in the formation of the Georgia Sociological Association in the mid-1960s and also served with great skill and dedication in the position of secretary-treasurer of the Southern Sociological Society during the 1970s. He also was the faculty advisor for many years for the undergraduate sociology club and the driving force behind a successful departmental reading group, Theory at the Grassroots. Drenan is survived by his loving wife of almost fifty years, Delores Kelley.

Albeno P. Garbin, James W. Balkwell, Paul Roman, Barry Schwartz, and James J. Dowd, University of Georgia.

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