

MacKinney, Loren Carey ^[1]

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MacKinney, Loren Carey

By Carlyle Sitterson, 1991

16 Dec. 1891–27 Oct. 1963

Loren Carey MacKinney, university professor, was born in Lake Crystal, Minn., the son of Everson Rider and Jennie May (Amy) MacKinney. He received his early education in the public schools of Minneapolis–St. Paul and of Appleton, Wis. Continuing his studies in Wisconsin, he was awarded an A.B. degree from [Lawrence College](#) ^[2], in Appleton, in 1913 and a master's degree from the [University of Wisconsin](#) ^[3] in 1916. Further graduate work earned him a certificate from the [University of Grenoble](#) ^[4], France, in 1919 and a Ph.D. degree in medieval history from the [University of Chicago](#) ^[5] in 1925.

MacKinney taught at North High School in Milwaukee from 1914 to 1918, then served in the [U.S. Army](#) ^[6] during World War I (1918–19). He began his college teaching career with professorships at William Jewell College, in Liberty, Mo. (1919–22), [Knox College](#) ^[7], in Galesburg, Ill. (1923–25), [Louisiana State University](#) ^[8] (1925–29), and [Ohio State University](#) ^[9] (1929–30). In 1930 he moved to Chapel Hill as professor of medieval history at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[10], remaining in the post until his death. He was named Kenan Professor of History in 1955 and held visiting appointments at the universities of [Chicago](#) ^[5] and [Illinois](#) ^[11], [Stanford University](#) ^[12], [the University of Virginia](#) ^[13], [the University of California at Los Angeles](#) ^[14], and elsewhere.

MacKinney's research interests and publications were in three major areas: early medieval culture, early medieval medicine, and the humanities in the United States. He was the author of *Early Medieval Medicine* (1937) ^[15], *The Medieval World* (1938) ^[16], *Bishop Fulbert and Education at the School of Chartres* (1957) ^[17], *Medical Illustrations in Medieval Manuscripts* (1965) ^[18], and more than fifty articles. A world renowned collector of medieval medical miniatures, he lectured at numerous universities and conferences in this country and in Europe. In 1936 he delivered the Noguchi Lectures on the history of medicine at [Johns Hopkins](#) ^[19].

He was a member of the [American Historical Association](#) ^[20], [the Mediaeval Academy of America](#) ^[21], [the American Association of the History of Medicine](#) ^[22], [the Southern Historical Association](#) ^[23], [the History of Science Society](#) ^[24], and many other professional organizations. He also served on the editorial boards of the *American Historical Review* (1952–57) and *Manuscripta*, the journal of the [Vatican Microfilm Collection at St. Louis University](#) ^[25].

Professor MacKinney's keen mind, optimistic spirit, and enthusiasm for his subject were reflected in his teaching, which he enlivened with illustrative material such as slides and musical recordings. He emphasized the progressive and humanistic aspects of medieval culture and vigorously denied the undeserved reputation of the Middle Ages as a "dark age," even as he deplored the frequently exaggerated reputation of the Renaissance as the dawn of the modern era. His dynamic personality attracted to him a large number of friends and admirers. His encouragement of scholarship among his students and his unflinching interest in their academic work bore fruit in the productivity and scholarly achievements of a number of his graduate students.

MacKinney was survived by his wife, the former Abigail Elizabeth Greenwood, whom he married on 30 June 1917, and a son, Dr. Loren G. MacKinney.

References:

Chapel Hill Weekly, 30 Oct. 1963

Directory of American Scholars, vol. 1 (1963)

Greensboro Daily News, 28 Oct. 1963; A. C. Howell, *The Kenan Professorships* (1956)

Who's Who in America, vol. 32 (1963)

Additional Resources:

The MacKinney Collection of Medieval Medical Illustrations: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/mackinney/mackinney.html> ^[26]

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