

## ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR. '33 (1917–2007)

He's been described as "one of the last great figures from the Golden Age of American intellectuals." Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. '33 was an academic, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, a champion of FDR's New Deal and an influential adviser to President John Kennedy. But above all, he was a lifelong student of American politics, and an insatiably curious one, from early boyhood until his death earlier this year at the age of 89.

As his son Stephen Schlesinger '60 told the Associated Press, "He had the enormous stamina and a kind of energy and drive which most people don't have, and it kept him going, all the way through his final hours. He never stopped writing, he never stopped participating in public affairs, he never stopped having his views about politics and his love of this nation."

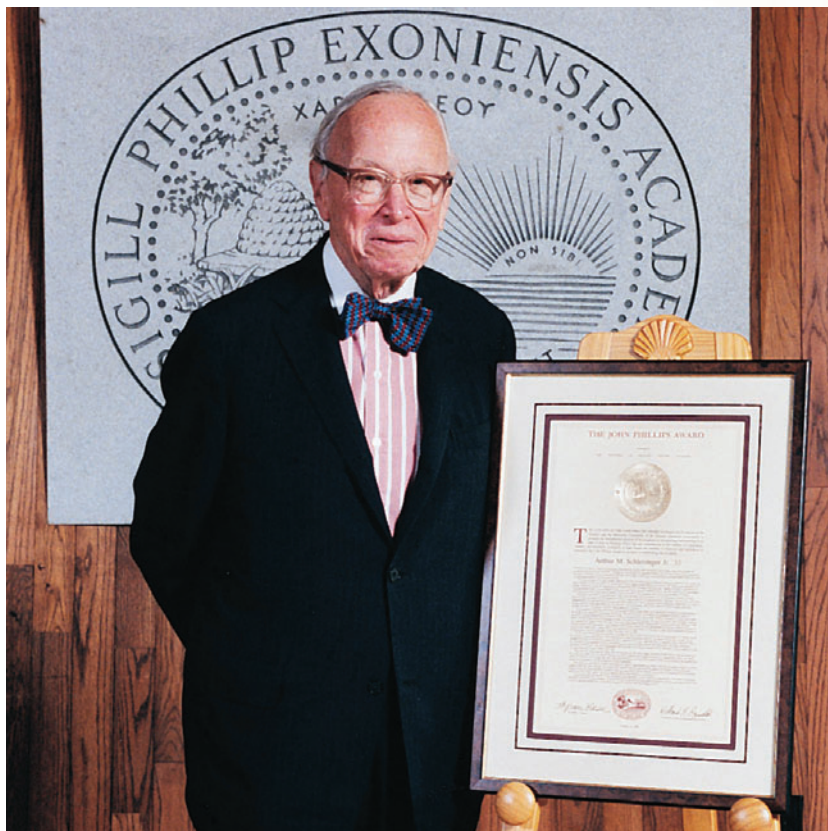
Arthur Schlesinger was just 13 when he arrived at Exeter in 1931, but so intellectually advanced that he was placed in the upper-middle form (11th grade). He recounted his Academy experiences in an essay he contributed to the book *Exeter Remembered*, edited by Darcy Curwen:

"I cannot truthfully say that these were the happiest years of my life; but this was not Exeter's fault. Adolescence is an unhappy time, and I would have moped and maundered wherever I might have been. Indeed, the freedom and impersonality of Exeter offered in certain respects the best possible environment for boys caught in a low gear of incertitude and discontent. Social relations were easy and casual. You had friends when you wanted them, and you could be left alone when you wanted to be left alone.

"Next to the freedom and the sense of being on one's own, the most important thing was the superb intellectual training. I came to Exeter at the beginning of the Harkness Plan. This provided for instruction in small groups. We sat around tables and talked back to the masters; education became, not a performance, but a process. Also the standards were high. I barely passed in my first term and thereafter set to work. I had never worked so hard in my life. When I went on to Harvard later, everything was easy."

Schlesinger published his first book shortly after graduating from Harvard; he was just 28 when he received his first Pulitzer Prize, for *The Age of Jackson*. Twenty years later, he won another Pulitzer, for *A Thousand Days*, his portrait of the Kennedy White House. Schlesinger also advised, and later wrote about, JFK's younger brother, earning a National Book Award for *Robert Kennedy and His Times*. His other works include *The Age of Roosevelt*, *The Imperial Presidency* and *War and the American Presidency*.

When Exeter presented him with the John Phillips Award in 1999, the citation described his achievements in this way: "Your great work has been to convince government to improve opportunities and enlarge freedoms for ordinary people. With an historian's wisdom, your goal always has been to remind us that the United States will be measured 'in the eyes of posterity not by its economic power nor by its military might, but by its character and its achievement as a civilization.'"



*In 1999, Arthur M. Schlesinger '33 received the John Phillips Award in recognition of his stature as "America's preeminent living historian."*