Remembering Ben Tilghman  
(1927-2023)

Photo by Ross Tilghman

Benjamin Ross Tilghman was born in St. Louis, Mo. in 1927. He received his BA degree from Washington University in 1950 and his MA degree in 1954. His Ph.D. is from the University of Washington. He taught at Reed College, Western State College of Colorado, the University of Wyoming, and from 1967 to his retirement in 1994 at Kansas State University. He was department head there from 1967 to 1980, establishing and building the Department’s strong research reputation.

Ben’s interest in the philosophy department and its students at Kansas State University was everlasting. He often contributed to a fund for scholarships for students, called the “Tilghman Excellence Fund,” set up in Ben’s name by several former students. And, significantly, he was instrumental in helping faculty establish, explore, and excel in their philosophical interests.

While at the University of Washington he was introduced to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose conception of philosophy continued to be the primary influence on this work. His interests were largely in aesthetics and the philosophy of art although he also “dabbled” (his word) in philosophy of religion, humorous philosophical short stories, and translations of works in French literature. Those who knew Ben will miss his keen intellect, curiosity, and wit.


James Hamilton, Kansas State University (emeritus)