Daniel Scott Smith, one of the most accomplished quantitative historians of his generation, died in Oak Park, Illinois, on January 5, 2011, after a long illness. An exceptionally original thinker, he offered an alternative way for historians to conceptualize and practice their craft, one that drew on the methods of the social sciences, particularly demography, but also respected the historian's interest in change over time.

Born in 1942 to Charles E. and Mildred McCloud Smith in Galesburg, Illinois, Smith grew up in Florida. He claimed an early interest in the numerical, spending time tracking things like baseball statistics. In 1963, after graduating with high honors from the University of Florida, he took a Greyhound bus west to continue his studies at the University of California, Berkeley, receiving the M.A. in 1965 and Ph.D. in 1973. He then completed a certificate in historical demography at Princeton University in 1974. His doctoral dissertation used the town of Hingham, Massachusetts, to investigate the many changes in population, family, and social structure that took place in North America between 1635 and 1880.

His dissertation and early publications brought him into contact with an emerging group within the profession, historians who had begun to use statistical methods to interpret their evidence. This tendency, first manifesting itself in political history, quickly spread to social history. After a brief stint at the University of Connecticut Smith moved to the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he spent the remainder of his academic career. He went there to join a specialist in quantitative political history, Richard Jensen. Together he and Jensen set up the Family and Community History Center at the Newberry Library which served as a base for externally funded quantitative research projects and, perhaps most importantly, a summer program that taught history graduate students and faculty how to analyze quantitative data. In the period from 1974 to 1982, Smith helped train approximately 600 scholars in quantitative methods at the Center. Smith also played a leadership role in his favorite history organization, the Social Science History Association and served as its President in 1987-1988. Its networks and annual conferences remain the most important sites for interdisciplinary exchange on historical topics. While Smith served on a number of editorial boards, including the American Historical Review, his greatest commitment was to Historical Methods, a journal he edited from 1979-1990 and which for over three decades has published both technical pieces on innovative ways to analyze quantitative data and broader essays on historical theory. Because of his prominence in quantitative history, other historians and social scientists frequently sought his counsel on their research and he spent considerable time commenting on his colleagues' papers.

In his research career, he resolutely followed the road lesser travelled. Although he never authored a book, the achievement most rewarded by the discipline, he wrote scores of heavily cited journal articles. Some of his most imaginative work examined historical practice and theory

and the interactions between cultural, economic, and demographic variables. His analyses of the impact of feminism on fertility, parental power on marriage, and parental attitudes on child naming practices helped establish the field of early American family history. He explored the effect of norms, resource constraints, and demography on American and northwest European family systems and demonstrated the value of demographic data—such as his study of premarital pregnancy rates between 1640 and 1971—as indicators of social and familial change. In addition, he made important contributions to the study of aging and changes in mortality. At various points, his research was supported by fellowships and grants from such organizations as the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, The National Institutes for Health, and the Stanford Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. He also held a Fulbright fellowship at the University of Lund, Sweden.

In a period when historians proclaim as their highest goal the historicizing of a topic, Smith wrote about the discipline's "contextual morass," one which prevented scholars from being able to reflect on change over time. When a pledge of allegiance to agency graced almost every social history study, he argued that an "exaggerated individualism" in explanations of cause precluded historians from examining problems where groups or geographic areas were the more appropriate unit of analysis. Unlike many senior scholars who consider contributing to the book review section of professional journals as a waste of valuable time and a good way to accumulate enemies, he deemed it a professional responsibility, continuing to provide honest and insightful appraisals to the end.

In short, Dan Smith could never be accused of "careerism."

In November 2010, at its annual meeting, the SSHA held a lively session devoted to assessing his many contributions to the profession. There, despite the difficulties presented by his illness, Smith was able to offer reflections on his deep affection for historical inquiry and the social sciences. Throughout his career, he concluded, he had approached history as a series of fascinating puzzles, ones that demanded to be solved.

He is survived by a son, Jason, of Albuquerque, who teaches American history at the University of New Mexico, a daughter, Sarah, of Washington, D.C, his former wife, Yvonne, a brother, Douglas, of Georgetown, Tex., and a sister, Gretchen Newhall, of Tiger, Ga. A gifted scholar with a talent for asking—and answering—the most important of questions, Daniel Scott Smith was a kind, thoughtful, and generous colleague, friend, companion, teacher, and father.

Donations in his memory may be directed to the Palliative Care Program at Northwestern Memorial Foundation, Galter Pavilion, Suite 3-200, 251 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312-926-2033).

J. David Hacker, Binghamton University, State University of New York
Carole Shammas, University of Southern California
Jason Scott Smith, University of New Mexico