



Jerome M. Ziegler

October 25, 1923 – May 3, 2012

Jerome M. Ziegler, former dean of the College of Human Ecology, died on May 3, 2012 in Ithaca. He was born in New York City on October 25, 1923.

Jerry Ziegler was an uncommon professor. Before coming to Cornell in 1978 as dean of the College of Human Ecology, he held a diverse array of positions. After officers' training school during World War II, coincidentally on the Cornell campus, he served as a pharmacist's mate in the navy. At the end of the war he became an economic analyst for the Marshall Plan, but resigned in protest when required to sign a loyalty oath. He worked as a machinist in auto factories and organized for the UAW. As President of the American Foundation for Continuing Education he combined his commitment to working people with his devotion to education. Twice he ran for congress in Illinois – losing by less than expected in a heavily Republican district. He participated in designing and conducting training for the first three cohorts of Peace Corps volunteers. He was director of the Rodman Job Corps Center in New Bedford, MA, the first urban Job Corps site. His career in higher education began as professor and vice president at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, which he helped found as an experimental college.

He then became commissioner of higher education in Pennsylvania. After serving as chair of the Department of Urban Affairs and Policy Analysis at the New School for Social Research, he was appointed dean at Cornell.

During Jerry's ten years as dean the College moved toward its current state as a locus for scholarly analysis of human issues. Enrollment grew by 18 percent during his tenure, while the proportion of underrepresented minority students increased by 175 percent. He championed new initiatives in international and field study and incorporated the Sloan Program in Health Administration when it moved from what became the Johnson School of Management.

Abandoning his prior peripatetic ways, Jerry found a home at Cornell, advising subsequent deans and teaching, both in The Department of Policy Analysis and Management and in the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, where he taught until 2011, 18 years after becoming emeritus. He

was beloved by generations of CIPA students, who appreciated his personal interest in them and their backgrounds as well as his expertise. The seminar was his natural milieu. Every student became involved in an extended dialog. His style of teaching was Socratic in method and in content; he invoked the Greek philosophers readily for the insights they can provide on current issues. He wore his erudition lightly, drawing on his knowledge and his diverse experiences to inform and engage, not to impress. His teaching method, he explained, came from his time as a union organizer and adult educator. He learned from this experience that all learners can grapple productively with complex issues, bringing the unique perspectives afforded by their personal experiences, disciplined by the kind of careful reading, thinking, and communication he had learned at Andover and the University of Chicago. He continued to develop this teaching style outside the university as well. A Leadership Seminar he organized and led for public school principals in major Northeastern cities had Greek philosophy at its core but included as well contemporary thinking and research about education policy and practice.

Jerry's devotion to his family was evident to all who knew him. He met Patricia McGraw when they were sixteen-year-olds attending a summer camp (a "lefty" camp, they said). They had been married for 64 years when Pat died. A love of gardening was one of the many things they shared. Pat was the flower expert; Jerry tended the vegetables. His asparagus and carrots were always the best. They also nurtured cats and dogs. But their greatest love was for their children. Jerry Jr. is a business owner, as is his wife Kathy; Sharon is a physician; Nick and his wife, Margaret, are social scientists. Jerry was predeceased by his brother Warren.

Pat and Jerry gathered around them people of all ages from diverse backgrounds who became each other's friends by being theirs. The number and range of people who considered Jerry their mentor is astonishing. In addition to generations of students it includes faculty colleagues and department chairs, one of his home health aides who credits him with helping her find a career path, and a prisoner in Sing Sing whom Jerry lived long enough to see paroled.

Jerry Ziegler challenged and inspired students and colleagues alike to think more carefully, read more widely and deeply, and to turn their scholarship to the benefit of those most in need. He was a rare scholar, leader, teacher, and friend whose life and career exemplify what an educational institution should be about.

Stephen F. Hamilton, Chairperson; Joan Jacobs Brumberg, John Eckenrode