



## **William J. Wasmuth**

February 6, 1925 – March 29, 2018

Professor William J. Wasmuth, who taught at Cornell's ILR School for 48 years, died on March 29, 2018, at the age of 93. Born on February 6, 1925, Professor Wasmuth earned a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Jefferson College (St. Louis) in 1945, an MBA from Washington University (St. Louis) in 1955, and a doctorate in Business Administration from Indiana University in 1961. Coming to ILR in 1961, Professor Wasmuth taught a variety of extremely well-received management courses to undergraduate and graduate students, and to off-campus students in outreach programs, until he retired in 2009.

Before coming to Cornell, Bill served in the Air Force (1946-47), worked as a methods and procedure analyst for several business organizations and the federal government (1947-53), was Vice President/Consultant to the President of Business Collaborators, Inc. in St. Louis, then an assistant plant manager at the Freund Baking Company (1954-58), also in St. Louis, and ended up serving as Member and Secretary of the Executive Committee of Freund in 1957-58.

A major part of Professor Wasmuth's teaching involved the development and use of management simulation scenarios. He developed in 1977 the Management Organizational Simulation—An Innovative Challenge (MOSAIC) course for supervisors in health facilities. Later, still exhibiting skills with acronyms, he co-developed Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Management Simulation (CHARMS) for training supervisors in hotel and other service establishments. Students in the CHARMS course would make various decisions about running a hotel, involving such things as finances, marketing, operations, and human resources. These decisions were run through the simulation and the results (occupancy rates, revenues, profits, etc.) would be calculated. The enrollment limit of the joint course was 35, and it filled every time out; in addition, it got great ratings from students.

Among Professor Wasmuth authored a variety of publications on supervision and training, including two books: *Dynamics of Supervision: Organizational Cases and Intrigues*, and *Effective Supervision: Developing Your Skills through Critical Incidents*.

Off campus, Professor Wasmuth had an entrepreneurial spirit and provided consulting and training services (including his CHARMS course) to a variety of business, nonprofit and governmental organizations both in the United States and in 15 countries across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. During his tenure at Cornell, Bill was also appointed to Visiting Professor positions in hotel management at France's Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales (three times) and Switzerland's Glion Institute of Higher Education (twice).

In the early 1960s, Professor Wasmuth began a project to introduce smart business management principles and management simulations to sheltered workshops, which were quickly popping up all over the United States in response to the deinstitutionalization movement. This early work caught the attention of the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which served as an early precursor to long-term training grants sponsored by the RSA focused on community rehabilitation programs.

By the early 1970's, Professor Wasmuth was leading a group of ILR researchers on disability, in a program called the Human Services Administration (HSA). These researchers not only examined how sheltered workshops were operating from a business perspective, but their endeavor broadened to include looking at public policy and the increasing need for independent living and supported employment training. In 1991, HSA was replaced by the Program on Employment and Disability (PED), which was designated as an institute about a decade later. Thus, Professor Wasmuth was a key scholar and innovator in the ultimate development of the ILR School's prestigious K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability.

Professor Wasmuth is survived by his wife Norma; his children: Craig, Scott, and Toni; his daughter-in-law Victorina; his son-in-law Everett; and his grandchildren: Elizabeth, Christine, Abigail, Sara, and Jennifer.

*Written by Robert S. Smith, Lee D. Dyer and Thomas P. Golden*