



Lois Spier Gray

October 17, 1923 – September 20, 2018

Professor Emerita Lois Spier Gray passed away on September 20, 2018, in New York City, only a few weeks before her 95th birthday. Lois continued going into the ILR School's Outreach office on 34th Street and mentoring faculty in NYC and Deans in Ithaca until shortly before her death.

Lois joined the ILR School Extension faculty in 1947, when she was appointed by Dean Irving Ives to direct the first Extension office located in Buffalo, New York. In 1956, she moved to New York City to direct the Metropolitan District Office and, in 1976, became associate dean and director of extension. She was among the first faculty members hired by the new ILR School and was, at her death, its longest serving faculty member. She was one of the founders of the field of labor education and continued to be both a scholar and labor educator throughout her career.

Lois's work was known worldwide, and she helped numerous countries start their own labor education programs, including Chile, Jamaica, and Barbados, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Additionally, she served as a consultant to universities as diverse as the University of Haifa and Penn State University.

During her tenure at ILR, Lois was an innovative and supportive leader, encouraging the development of new and exciting programs. Examples of new programming introduced under her sponsorship were "training trainers" workshops for industry and unions, the Institute for Women and Work, the Latino Leadership Program, international worker exchanges, the Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women, off-campus credit and certificate courses for workers, the Program for Employment and Workplace Systems, and the Cornell-Baruch Master's Program in New York City.

Lois continued doing research and publishing throughout her career. Her publications dealt with labor market trends, women and minorities in the workforce, training and adult education, labor management relations in the entertainment industry, and women in union leadership. Another focus of her work was union structure, governance, and administration. Her wide-ranging work resulted in publications such as "A Socioeconomic Profile of Puerto Rican New Yorkers" for U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and *Under the Stars: Essays on Labor Relations in Arts and Entertainment*, and articles in academic journals including the *Industrial Relations Review*, *Monthly Labor Review*, and *Arbitration Journal*, as well as chapters in books too numerous to mention.

Lois understood what it meant for Cornell to be the land grant university of New York State and the accompanying definition of public service. She was appointed by three governors to chair the New York State Apprenticeship and Training Council and served on the New York State Manpower Training Council and Displaced Homemakers Taskforce. She also served on the boards of directors of various non-profit organizations, ranging from the Regional Plan Association to Non-Traditional Employment for Women to the Workers Defense League.

In recognition of her significant contributions, Lois was the recipient of many honors and awards from academic and civic organizations over the years, including the New York Hispanic Labor Committee, the New York State Labor History Association, the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, and the New York State AFL-CIO. She received the Alice H. Cook and Constance F. Cook Award for her efforts on behalf of women at Cornell. Both the Labor and Employment Relations Association and the United Association for Labor Education gave Lois their Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Lois was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and spent her childhood in Edmond, Oklahoma, where she completed high school. She received her bachelor's degree at Park College in Missouri, majoring in Economics, also the subject of her M.A. from the University of Buffalo and Ph.D. at Columbia University. She was married to Ed Gray (deceased), who had been the Regional Director and Member of the International Executive Board of the UAW.

Written by Ileen A. DeVault, Esta Bigler, Lou Jean Fleron, and Rosemary Batt