



IN MEMORIAM

Donald Erickson
Professor Emeritus of Education
UC Los Angeles
1925 - 2015

Donald Arthur Erickson, an Emeritus Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, passed away at age 89 on January 20, 2015 in Anacortes, Washington.

Don was recognized nationally and internationally for his research and advocacy on behalf of community, religious and individual freedom with respect to schooling and education. As a specialist in school administration, school financing, and educational research together with his commitment to human rights, he was widely sought in legal and policy matters such as being selected by the U.S. President's Commission on School Finance and the Illinois Educational Association to produce one of its significant volumes of educational research. He was an expert witness before the Supreme Court, and testified in numerous other key court cases on school equity. Noteworthy was his extensive consulting at major U.S. universities and abroad, and assisting states, school districts, individual schools and members of a school's community in exercising their freedom to have a school that respected their community and individual values. However, he always coupled this freedom with the need to adhere to empirical evidence showing the effects of their policies and practices upon student learning. His defense of the rights of the Amish to reflect their religious views in their own schools, and his support for the first Navajo community- led school are examples. His constant advocacy for financial fairness in funding private schooling were ground- breaking instances of Don's contributions to understanding educational issues of diversity and equity that were later to dominate education change

Don's own experience as a tenth grade student in an unchallenging high school led to his dropping out of school and to independent cultivation of music, employment experiences, and self studies that later enabled him to gain admission to Bob Jones University, where he earned a BA in English, and subsequently to The University of Chicago, where he earned an MA and a PhD in Educational Administration. Prior to attending graduate school, he taught in Christian schools and served as educational director for the National Association of Christian Schools. After his doctoral degree, Don was appointed as Assistant Professor of Education at Florida State University, followed by dual duties as Professor and Director of the Midwest Administration Center at The University of Chicago. Later Don was a Professor of Education at Simon Fraser University, and Professor and Director of the Center for Research on Private Education at the University of San Francisco. He came to UCLA in 1981, and served as a Professor of Education until his retirement in 1993.

As a teacher, Don was a model for one interested in attending to the individual student as well as assessing the consequences and learning that followed from approaches to individualization. High expectations and challenges were encouraged, together with his support while the learners achieved them. The overarching question for his own work was "What are the determinants and consequences of the various ways of

organizing an educational enterprise?" His extensive publications and presentations testify to the fruitfulness of the endeavor and his courage in critiquing top- down education. For example, he faulted those preparing school administrators with a focus on procedures and practices set by policy members, who may have underlying motives and interests, instead of a focus on school and classroom variables that might affect student outcomes.

Donald Erickson will be remembered as a pioneer in his research and advocacy, leading the way to treatment of what have become the central issues in schooling.

John D. McNeil, Emeritus Professor