



IN MEMORIAM

Donald L. Foley
Professor of City and Regional Planning, Emeritus
UC Berkeley
1916 -2016

Donald L. Foley, Professor Emeritus, scholar, teacher, and key figure in the evolution of his field in the Department of City and Regional Planning at U.C. Berkeley, died on Wednesday, January 27th 2016 at his home in Berkeley at the age of 99.

Don Foley, as he was always known, came to Berkeley at a moment of great change, both for the field of city and regional planning, and for the university itself. The department had been founded under the leadership of T.J. Kent in 1948, only five years before Foley's arrival, and occupied a remarkably independent position, having its own budget line and reporting directly to the Chancellor. However, in line with the tradition of the older fields of architecture and landscape architecture, with which it was identified, planning was taught as a professional field, with relatively little academic research, and offered only a Master's degree. Don Foley, a graduate of Colgate University in Sociology and Political Science, studied public administration at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and received an M.A. in sociology from the University of Chicago, before serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Subsequently, he worked as a city planner in St. Louis, and then went on to a Ph.D. in Sociology at Washington University, St. Louis, which was then becoming the foremost school for sociology in the U.S. After a short period at the University of Rochester, in 1953 Foley was asked to join the department at Berkeley as its first social scientist. He remained at Berkeley until his retirement in 1979.

At Berkeley, Don Foley faced a very different intellectual environment from that of a conventional academic program. The professional and academic worlds of planning were beginning to change, pushed along by the experience of the New Deal and the

short-lived but powerfully influential planning program at the University of Chicago. However, its pedagogy remained rooted in practice. Although deeply grounded in professional practice, T.J. Kent and his colleagues recognized that social science would be a part of the field. The onus of making it happen fell first on Don Foley as a lone assistant professor. Not until the late 1950s and early 1960s would new Ph.Ds. from a range of fields reinforce him. However, he established a tradition of rigorous research, both in his own work and in his teaching, in particular, advancing the teaching and use of demographic information and analysis, both in the field, and within the Masters of City Planning program. In part, his success in this was due to his personality. Always calm and gracious, he would advance his positions with logic and reasoned argument; in short, he was a peacemaker at a time and in a situation when tempers might flare. His frequent remark, "it's a puzzle," would amuse younger faculty, but it always reminded us that we should be looking for answers. Foley's strength of character and innate sense of fairness served him well during two terms as chair of the Department, 1964-67 and 1974-1977. During the first of these, after the Free Speech Movement, the faculty grew explosively in number, with attendant tensions. During the second, in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and campus turmoil, the department saw more growth and political divisions, which together with budget stringency required all the calm guidance that he could give. During this period, too, the department began to offer the Ph.D. degree, to which he contributed greatly.

Don Foley's research took him in several directions. An admirer of Kingsley Davis, he maintained a strong and continuing interest in demography. However, perhaps his deepest and most lasting interest was in British town planning, and especially the governance of London and the creation of new towns in the aftermath of World War II. His books *Controlling London's Growth: Planning the Great Wen*, and *Governing the London Region: Reorganization and Planning in the 1960s* both remain important sources on the issue. Don enjoyed London, and spent sabbatical leaves there as a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics and at the Centre for Urban Studies while working on his books. However, he was very much a planner as well as a sociologist, and throughout his career researched and wrote papers and reports on planning issues. Among the numerous examples are reports on housing (on which he collaborated with Catherine Bauer Wurster and members of the Business School), and others on metropolitan and demographic issues in California. Still other publications ranged from urban design to automobile availability among the poor (in anticipation of the arrival of BART). He was continuously engaged during his years at UC Berkeley, both with academic and applied research directed towards urgent problems.

Over his long life, both as an active faculty member, and after retirement, Don Foley was always engaged with a variety of communities. The house on Mariposa Avenue in Berkeley, where he and his wife Katharine lived and raised a family over more than 60 years, was a welcome haven for students and faculty alike. After retiring, Don was part of the group that established the UC Faculty Association, and remained a life-long member of the "Little Thinkers" Friday luncheon group in the Men's Faculty Club. In retirement, he turned to his love of books, establishing a business that specialized in out-of-print university press books. His remarkable collection of Penguins is now in the

Bancroft Library. In addition, he was a skillful and enthusiastic genealogist, who was always ready to chase down the ancestors of family and friends.

Donald Foley lived a long, productive and rich life, always looking towards the positive. His wife of 73 years, Katharine, and his sons Tom and Bill predeceased him. He is survived by his daughters Margot Sheffner of Berkeley, and Judy Foley of San Ramon, together with daughters-in-law Carol Cahill of Port Townsend, and Linda Foley of Irvine, eleven grandchildren and step-grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Truly, one could say of him “a life well lived.”

Michael B. Teitz