



IN MEMORIAM

Jack W. Peltason
Professor of Political Science
UC Irvine
1923 – 2015

Founding faculty member and second chancellor at UCI never lost his interest in learning. Jack W. Peltason, president emeritus of the University of California and chancellor emeritus of UC Irvine, died Saturday, March 21, 2015 after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease. He was 91.

Peltason was an internationally recognized political scientist and scholar of constitutional law, and was the principal author of *Government by the People*, a fundamental text on American democracy for political science students.

Jack Peltason was born Aug. 29, 1923, in St. Louis, Mo. He earned his bachelor's and master's degree at the University of Missouri, where he met and married Suzanne Toll. His early teaching career began at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and continued with administrative responsibilities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Peltason's first stint at UC Irvine began in 1963, before the campus opened. As dean of the College of Arts, Letters and Science he was responsible for approving plans for the initial disciplines to be offered and for recruiting faculty. After classes began in 1965, he played a leading role in the creation of UCI's original academic plan as vice chancellor of academic affairs.

Because of his notable administrative talents, Peltason was appointed chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he served from 1967 to 1977.

Afterward he became the chief spokesman for higher education in 1977 when he was named president of the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C.

In 1984, Peltason returned to UCI as its second chancellor. During the eight years of his tenure, he presided over a period of rapid physical growth and expansion of the campus, which included a significant increase in student enrollment, massive building projects, increased funding for endowed chairs, housing the UC Humanities Research Institute and attracting the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering to build their western center on campus. He also was instrumental in negotiating a productive and lucrative relationship between the community and the young campus by founding the UCI Executive Roundtable of corporate partners, creating the UCI Medal to recognize contributions of both university and community members, and negotiating an agreement with the Irvine Co. that led to the University Research Park.

Again in 1992, Jack Peltason's talents were tapped for a larger role in higher education, when he was inaugurated as 16th president of the University of California. During his three-year term, the University of California was strained by bleak budget circumstances, which were somewhat relieved by Peltason reaching a multiyear funding compact with then governor Pete Wilson and authorizing the first of three early retirement programs for UC faculty and staff. Also during his tenure, university regents voted to end UC affirmative action practices. He met the challenge by strengthening outreach efforts across the system.

Peltason's retirement found him working out of several offices instead of one. He was founding chair of the leadership council for UCI's Center for the Study of Democracy and emeritus professor of political science; became president of The Donald Bren Foundation; and served on the boards of the Archstone Foundation, The Irvine Health Foundation, The Irvine Barclay Theatre, the Kavli Foundation and Kavli Institute, and Soka University of America.

Many honors and distinctions were bestowed on Jack Peltason throughout his career. UC President Janet Napolitano presented Jack with the President's Medal, the university's highest honor, last year. He was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the California Council on Science and Technology. Awards include the Clark Kerr Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Higher Education; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Founder's Award; and UCI's Extraordinarius Award (with Suzanne Peltason). The Jack W. Peltason Endowed Chair was established in his honor with a \$1 million anonymous donation in 2007 and the Peltason Lecture on Democracy was established by UCI's Center for the Study of Democracy. Major UCI roadways were named after him in 1997.

Jack Peltason is survived by his wife Suzanne, children Nancy, Timothy and Jill, seven grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and his extended family of friends and colleagues at UCI and throughout higher education.

William R. Schonfeld
Professor of Political Science