



IN MEMORIAM

David W. O'Shea
Associate Professor of Education, Emeritus
Los Angeles
1924 — 2004

Professor David W. O'Shea started his distinguished career in the department of Education at UCLA as an acting assistant professor in July 1968 while completing his Ph.D. in education, with a focus on sociology, at the University of Chicago. In the 1970s Dave was vice president and then president of the Sociology of Education Association. Always willing to serve, he headed the Department's sociology and anthropology of education specialization and was in two other specializations of the department during the 1970s and 80s. He accepted the vice chairmanship of the Department in July 1986 and held that position until June 1989, serving as both vice chair and acting chair for the spring quarter of 1988. Upon completing three years of exceptional departmental service in 1989, he became co-director of the National Survey for the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools Program. Although Dave retired after 23 years of service in June 1991, he accepted recalls for three more years to continue teaching two courses and co-directing the National Survey. On March 3, 2004 Professor O'Shea passed away after an extended illness. He is survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Rita, and son, Brendan.

Long before starting his Ph.D. studies at the University of Chicago, Dave was a leader in organizing young Catholic workers in England, the United States, Canada and Latin America. After four years of service as a radar technician in North Africa from 1943 to 1947 in Great Britain's Royal Air Force, he began training young people to apply Christian values in their lives and to serve their communities through social organizations, labor unions, and professional organizations. He traveled extensively, recruiting, fund raising, and developing organizations and conferences to promote social justice. He rose to become National Secretary of the Papal Volunteers for Latin America. During his five years in that position, he coordinated programs that recruited and placed more than 300 qualified teachers, nurses, and social workers in Latin America. Upon retirement Dave joined the Knights of Columbus and helped in raising funds for building his new parish church, Saint Maximilian Kolbe Church.

Professor O'Shea was a gentle scholar who brought his strong commitment to social justice and the dignity of workers to his research and teaching. He examined responses of schools to demographic changes, the responses of students of diverse backgrounds to schooling, and the preparation of teachers. Dave used the lenses of his own experiences and command of philosophy and sociology to illuminate how theory might inform practice. His study of the preparation of teachers in the early 1980s exemplifies this. He gathered survey, interview and observational data from faculty, master teachers and student teachers in three small laboratory programs. Using his sophisticated theoretical knowledge and an integrative analysis he uncovered why the incumbents of the programs were differentially satisfied. Then he pointed out what teacher preparation programs might do structurally to correct disjunctures between theoretical principles and effective teaching methods so that their students could acquire a philosophy of education as well as skill in classroom teaching.

Dave's teaching focused on structural solutions that would endure. He sought to instill appreciation for the deep, triangulated analysis of problems in schooling underserved groups that might lead to such solutions. For

many years he taught The Sociology of Education (co- listed with Sociology) and seminars on Education and Social Change and on Educational Organizations. His courses, which he continued teaching until 1994, were especially memorable for the way he contextualized methodological applications in terms of philosophical and sociological theory. One student noted that invitations to discuss class lectures over tea with Dave during class breaks were the highlight of his UCLA experience. Dave had helped him realize how Weber, Durkheim, and Kant had applications to education. In the 1970s he developed courses in survey methods and analyses of survey data to equip graduate students to use those methods in dissertations and future research. A former chair of the department characterized Professor O'Shea as representing the best of what we seek in an academic. He was always accessible to students and colleagues; he cared about teaching, pursued important research, and graciously carried out the myriad tasks demanded of a professor.

Dave was an avid reader, especially of philosophy and sociology. Though erudite, he was soft spoken, always gracious and charming, never affected or pedantic. He had a quiet, dry wit, and enjoyed golf and gardening as much as a philosophical treatise.

Charles Healy
John McNeil
Wellford Wilms