



IN MEMORIAM

Richard W. Gable
Professor of Political Science, Emeritus
UC Davis
1920-2008

Richard W. (Dick) Gable, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, died on February 14, 2008. Gable was born in Illinois in 1920 and was 88 at the time of his death. He earned his undergraduate degree in History and Drama from Bradley University in 1942 and was immediately selected as one of forty Fellows at the National Institute of Public Affairs in Washington D.C. After being called to serve as an officer in the Army, however, he decided in 1946 to become a university professor, entered the University of Chicago and received his doctorate in Political Science from there in 1950. He had taught at Davis since 1966.

As a graduate student at Chicago, Dick was deeply influenced by Leonard D. White, a leading historian of the federal civil service who had served in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt and who became a pioneer of research that took seriously and inquired deeply into the professional practices of large government organizations in the United States. Dick thus became an advocate for the development of public administration as a sub-discipline of political science, a development that substantially accelerated after the Second World War. He believed that the performance of government agencies and their influences on public policy could not properly be understood without closely examining subjects such as personnel management and the terms and conditions of public employment. He taught courses in these subjects throughout his career. These interests also persuaded Dick of the value of combining the academic study of public administration with practical experience of working in and with public organizations, at all levels of government, and he was always a tireless supporter of student internships and of university teaching that reached out to professionals already working in public service.

Dick took these interests with him from Chicago first to Ohio State University, where he taught for two years, to Stanford University, where he was a faculty member for three years, and then to the University of Southern California, where he worked for thirteen years at the heart of one of the leading programs in public administration in the United States. USC was then a place very much at the forefront of the growth of public administration as a professional field, extending the systematic study of organizations to understand their influence on public policy and, as an outgrowth of that, to exploring ways graduate programs and in-service education could substantially advance both the professionalization of the civil service and the solution of public problems.

Dick's later appointment at Davis built on his contributions to the development of these academic strengths. It was also a way of putting his expertise at the service of California government, especially the state administrative agencies headquartered in Sacramento. Dick subsequently contributed, along with his Davis colleague and close contemporary in public administration, Lloyd Musolf, to the formation of a graduate program in administration at Davis. It eventually became the Graduate School of Management, training people for careers in both the public and private sectors. Dick was also a reliable contributor, even after he

moved to Davis, to USC's graduate program in administration based in the state capital. He sustained, with Musolf, the work of the Institute of Governmental Affairs on the Davis campus. He argued successfully for the introduction of a new undergraduate major in political science at Davis, the degree in Political Science: Public Service, and for a Master's program in state politics and policy, although the latter was later abandoned. And Dick took what he regarded as an appropriately professional, active, and long-term role in both the American Society for Public Administration and the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The most formative period in Dick's professional life and the one that more than any other shaped his scholarly legacy began, however, with an assignment that took him from USC to Iran from 1955-57, during which time he helped establish a School of Public Administration at the University of Tehran. A second overseas tour took him to Pakistan from 1962-63, where he taught at the University of the Punjab and helped found an institute for administrative research. These two experiences led to a long period of reflection, further research, and writing, establishing Dick as an early and leading contributor to what eventually would come to be called development administration. The broad outlines of his thinking on this subject were pulled together in *Political Development and Social Change* (1966), co-edited with Jason Finkle. These interests also carried Dick to consulting assignments and conferences and training sessions in over a dozen countries around the world, bringing him into contact with a wide variety of both national and international agencies and organizations. His deepening intellectual interest in development administration also took an important empirical and comparative turn when Dick entered into a collaboration with J. Fred Springer, one of Dick's students and later a professor at the University of Missouri, to make a systematic analysis of the administration of rice production in four Asian countries; Indonesia, South Korea, The Philippines, and Thailand. Their work culminated in a book (*Administering Agricultural Development in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Four National Programs* [1976]), still highly regarded as a conceptual and methodological precursor to much later work on the contextual hierarchies that shape organizational behavior and performance in different political cultures. The book's use of statistical techniques to analyze data collected in the field from practicing administrators and managers was an influential innovation.

Although his collaboration with Springer was exceptionally close and productive, Dick generally took his relationships with his students very seriously, believing that he should be accessible, that proper mentoring was important, that his personal example would lead them also to cultivate professional relationships based on mutual respect, and that they should always strive to find real world applications for their academic interests. Every lecture he gave was a well-prepared performance. His meticulous preparation and high standards grew out of his determination to lay the best possible foundation for the future growth and welfare of his students.

At Davis, Dick's academic and administrative leadership abilities were quickly recognized, first through his chairmanship of the Department of Political Science and later through the Academic Senate. He chaired the UC Davis Division of the Academic Senate in 1986-87 and later fulfilled the same role on a UC system-wide basis. This Academic Senate work, most especially through committees dealing with faculty welfare, was a reflection of both Dick's long-standing interest in the conditions of employment in large organizations, like the University of California, and his professional selflessness. He took seriously his membership in the University as a community, and it carried over, even after his retirement, into the work of the UC Davis Emeriti/ae Association. He also played a major role in raising the money to support the writing and publication of *Abundant Harvest: The History of the University of California* (2001).

Alongside his strong vocation as a professional member of the academic community, Dick also cultivated his avocation as an avid photographer, particularly after he retired. He took photographs in more than 90 countries he visited, always carefully noting the provenance of each. Many of them still line the walls of his home in Davis and others are carefully stored on bookshelves; fascinating snapshots of, for example, the feudal conditions Dick encountered in Afghanistan in the mid-1950s.

Dick was also very much a family man. He met his wife and companion of more than sixty years, Myra Ann Kagen, who still lives in Davis, when they were graduate students at Chicago. There are three children and three grand-children.

Frank Sherwood
Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith