

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**CHARLES JELAVICH****(November 15, 1922—April 23, 2013)**

Charles Jelavich was born and grew up in the Santa Clara valley town of Mountain View. Now part of the densely settled “Silicon Valley,” Mountain View when Charles lived there was a small community surrounded by orchards. His parents, immigrants from the Austrian Empire with only grammar school educations, were cherry and apricot farmers. Charles played multiple sports in high school and also did well enough scholastically to receive two scholarships to continue his studies at the nearby University of California, Berkeley.

“I was going to start out by taking Spanish,” he explained in a 2005 interview conducted by emeritus professor Robert W. Campbell. “I had to make a choice of a language, and a very good friend of mine said, ‘What language are you going to take?’ I said that I was going to take Spanish, and he said, ‘Why?’ ‘Because it is the easiest language.’ He said, ‘That is a hell of a reason for taking a language.’ I said, ‘What should I take?’ He said, ‘Why don’t you take Russian?’ I didn’t even know where Russia was. Not knowing any better, I decided to take Russian to study Slavic languages.”

Charles very soon found out where Russia was and how much he delighted in learning Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and a few more European languages. He completed his bachelor’s degree at Berkeley in 1944 in Slavic languages. In the same year he married Barbara Brightfield, a fellow student, and began a life-long intellectual collaboration with her.

After a stint in the U.S. Army from 1944 to 1946, where he acted as an interpreter in the office of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Charles returned to Berkeley to complete his master’s and doctoral degrees (in 1947 and 1949 respectively), this time in history. He joined the faculty of the Department of History at Berkeley, teaching in his special area of Balkan and Hapsburg history. He progressed through the ranks from instructor to associate professor.

A source of disappointment, however, was the inability of his wife, now Barbara Jelavich, to obtain a teaching position at Berkeley, despite her impressive accomplishments as a published scholar of diplomatic history. Robert F. Byrnes, chair of the Department of History at Indiana University, seized this opportunity to lure the Jelaviches to IU with the offer of a professorship for each of them. Byrnes was then in the process of building the largest program of Russian and East European studies in the country. The addition of Charles and Barbara Jelavich soon made IU the premier U.S. school for the production of historians in the fields of Central Europe and the Balkans.

The main focus of Charles's research throughout his career was modern nationalism among the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula. He produced two major monographs on this subject, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism: Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886* (University of California Press, 1958), and *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Ohio State University Press, 1990). During the thirty-two years intervening between these books, Charles was not idle. He co-wrote or co-edited with Barbara six additional books on Balkan history, and produced another essay collection, co-edited with Tihomir Vulovic, on modern literary developments in Yugoslavia and America. He also published more than thirty scholarly articles on related topics.

Recognition and support for his scholarly work came from a variety of sources, including the Ford Foundation, Social Science Research Council, American Philosophical Society, American Council of Learned Societies, National Endowment for the Humanities, Fulbright-Hays, International Research and Exchanges Board, Woodrow Wilson Center, Mellon Foundation, and Indiana University. In 1992 the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, the leading North American professional organization for specialists in Russian and East European fields, jointly bestowed on Charles and Barbara its highest honor, the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies.

Charles was an enthusiastic advocate for foreign language and area studies education. He was regularly asked to serve on national and international committees of Slavic Studies and to organize international conferences and workshops. He also served on the editorial boards of

nine scholarly journals, most with an interdisciplinary profile. His service to the profession culminated in his election to the presidency of the interdisciplinary American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in 1987.

Despite his many contributions to interdisciplinary organizations, Charles believed firmly that scholars ought to find their home in a disciplinary department. "I think that a student should have a degree in a discipline," he explained to an interviewer in 1993, "and then you should take courses in other fields. Degrees in Slavic Studies were worthless because who knew what to do with these people? We had students [at Berkeley] with PhDs in Slavic Studies... and it was a disaster. Who would hire them?" Experience had taught him that a Russian department would want only instructors with a Russian degree, a history department a scholar with a history degree. So, while Charles promoted area studies, he thought that specialists should get a broad view of the field at an early stage and then concentrate on a disciplinary field for their PhD.

He also had strong feelings about what he believed was an illegitimate pairing of East European studies and Russian studies. He spoke passionately for the study of East Europe and East Central Europe for their own sakes and regarded these regions as belonging more to the sphere of European than of Russian history. But Charles conceded that the creation of centers of Russian and East European studies was necessary during the Cold War. "We would never have gotten one penny [for East European studies] from the United States government if we tried to separate Russia and Eastern Europe," he declared in the 1993 interview.

Charles's professional engagement and strong opinions made him a sought-after teacher. He was a popular undergraduate teacher who introduced many Indiana students to what for them must have been a remote and mysterious corner of the globe. The widest impact of his teaching was, however, at the graduate level. He inspired many young people in our master's degree programs in history and in area studies to go on to careers in the field of Russian and East European studies. Among these were Robert Gates, later Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and Secretary of Defense. A number of other students of Charles went on to distinguished careers in the Foreign Service.

At the PhD level, he and Barbara shared duties, regularly supervising the studies of a couple of dozen candidates. Charles himself served on more than fifty dissertation committees, and together they produced fifty-nine PhDs at IU. One of his doctoral students, Nick Novosel, recently commented that, “classes with Charles were always entertaining—often a whirlwind of the exploits of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and other East Europeans,” with an occasional pause to let people catch their breath. Novosel continued, “Above all... mentoring was where Charles excelled. His characteristic integrity, consistency, and reliance on common sense were trademarks.”

Charles was also a good mentor to his two sons. Both became academics, Mark a professor of economics, and Peter an intellectual historian.

Charles’s greatest legacy is undoubtedly his students. They can be found throughout the United States and abroad in college teaching positions, university administration, government service, and international organizations.

Finally, no biography of Charles would be complete without mentioning his enthusiasm for sports. In high school he played football, basketball, and baseball, and his interest in sports continued throughout his career. He was a lifetime season ticket holder to IU basketball and rarely missed a game. As for baseball, his San Francisco Bay Area roots endured in his support for the Giants. He and Barbara traveled to Cincinnati to catch a game when the Giants were in town.

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