

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
SHELDON STRYKER
(May 26, 1924 – May 4, 2016)

Sheldon was born on May 26, 1924, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He served in the Army during World War II, becoming a battlefield medic in Europe and earning a Purple Heart medal after being wounded in France. After the war, he finished college at the University of Minnesota, where he was drawn to sociology and the prospect of the academic life. He eventually earned his PhD from U-M in 1955, but his teaching career at IU started in 1950.

Sheldon married Alyce Agranoff (Stryker) in 1947 in St. Paul — their first date was at a Stan Kenton dance. Once they landed in Bloomington, their family began to grow and, somehow, Sheldon managed to become a world-class scholar while attending seemingly every ballgame or concert that involved his five children.

Sheldon's list of academic awards and honors included lifetime achievement markers like the Cooley Mead Award from the Social Psychology section of the American Sociological Association (ASA), prestigious editorships of the *Social Psychology Quarterly* (1967-1969) and the *American Sociological Review* (1982-1986), a Fulbright Fellowship in Italy (1966-67), and a year at the Center for the Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto (1986-87). During an awards ceremony honoring Sheldon as recipient of the 2009 W.E.B. DuBois Career Award of Distinguished Scholarship presented at the ASA, one colleague stated, "one would be hard-pressed to find a scholar who has accomplished as much as Sheldon Stryker has during the second half of the 20th century. The body of his lifetime work, which continues to thrive, has been exemplary to all sociologists."

In addition to his theoretical writings, his research emphasized scientific methods and quantitative analysis. He authored or co-authored of eight books including the first Rose Monograph, *Deviance, Selves and Others* (1971), with Michael Schwartz; the very influential *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (1980); and *Self, Identity and Social Movements* (co-edited with Timothy Owens and Robert White, 2000). He published over seventy journal articles and book chapters including the top all-time cited article in *Social Psychology Quarterly* and a second *SPQ* article in the top ten. Sheldon also served as the editor of the *American Sociological Review* (1982-1986), *Sociometry* (now *Social Psychology Quarterly* 1967-1969) and as the first editor of the American Sociological Association's *Arnold and Carolyn Rose Monographic Series* (1971-1974).

Sheldon served in many capacities at IU. He was chair of the Sociology Department at IU from 1969-75 and for nearly twenty-five years was Director of the university's pre-doctoral and post-doctoral training program in Identity, Self, Role and Mental Health. As a distinguished

professor emeritus of sociology at Indiana University, Sheldon continued to collaborate and publish papers with his former students, as well as his daughter, Robin, who followed in his footsteps into the field. He still mentored graduate students, remained a regular at the ASA's annual conference, and at the age of ninety lectured in Italy.

Back home in Bloomington and in Sarasota, Fla., where he lived during the winter, he was an avid arts consumer, taking in jazz and classical music, theater, opera, and ballet. The great sorrow of Sheldon's life was outliving his beloved wife, who died in 2009 a month shy of their 62nd wedding anniversary. In later years he often said that his biggest joy came from monitoring the professional and personal lives of his children, all of whom survive him: Robin, professor of sociology at the University of Arizona in Tucson; Jeffrey, professor of chemistry at the University of Alberta in Edmonton; David, executive vice president and general counsel of the Huntsman Corp. in Houston; Michael, associate professor of jazz piano at Western Illinois University in Macomb; and Mark, arts reporter and critic with the Detroit Free Press.

Sheldon, who died on May 4 at Heartland Health Care & Rehabilitation Center in Sarasota, was still living independently when a fall at home in late March resulted in a broken hip. He was ninety-one and died in the wake of complications following surgery.

Upon notification of his passing, many former students shared personal memories of Sheldon, memories that speak to "the many lives he touched and how much he will be missed" (Brea Perry). One student said: "Shel always supported graduate students. He was not only an intellectual giant, but also a real mensch, and I feel so lucky to have known him, in the classroom, at happy hours where he would tell all of us students stories and it was absolutely inspirational having him on my committee, reading my work and advising," (Lisa Jane Thomassen). Another wrote, "I will miss his memorable one liners as well as long monologues. I will also miss him walking around ASA faster than most and complaining that his son made him carry a cane that was slowing down his progress. May he rest in paradise among the legends," (Rashawn Ray). "I will always be grateful to Shel.... On 9/11/2001, he was teaching our social psych seminar. I know Shel was worried about the safety of his family and friends, but he was able to calm down a room of nervous students. When I think of the terrible events of that day...I also think of a kind teacher and scholar who truly cared about his students in a very selfless way," (Claudia Geist).

Some colleagues simply stated, "I really loved and respected Shel," (Timothy Owens). "I loved Shel for his warmth and soul. He was a great teacher and mentor, a model to us all," (Mike Hout). "He will be sorely missed, and I will sorely miss him," (Peggy Thoits). "...He was simply always so fair and kind...He taught me a lot about how to treat people, even when they aren't being very nice to you," (Karen Edwards). Others shared: "He was extraordinarily influential to me and my work," (Melissa Milkie). "Shel was a wonderful teacher and mentor

and that his teaching, scholarship, and approach to students, has significantly influenced my career. I'm a better scholar, teacher, and mentor, because of him," (Robert White). "He was such an institution...such a presence. He leaves a formidable legacy and a gaping hole," (Karen Hegtvedt). "He was a giant in the field and a driving force in building an outstanding sociology program that so many of us were privileged to be a part of. He touched generations of scholars and graduate students and his influence will continue for decades," (Michael Wallace).

In recognition of his commitment to the Department of Sociology, Indiana University and the profession, be it resolved that this resolution be a part of the minutes of the Bloomington Faculty Council, and that copies be sent to his children, Robin Stryker, Jeffrey Stryker, David Stryker, Michael Stryker, and Mark Stryker.

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