

my degree, I stopped in his office one day to discuss the upcoming challenges of law school. He took me to lunch that day (he apologized that it could only be to the Union) and did his best to help me prepare. He even flattered the success I had achieved in my undergraduate studies. He paid for both of our lunches out of his own pocket. I was very impressed that a man of his importance had taken the time for a lowly undergrad.

I hope that he did not suffer in his passing. Dr. Smith and Washburn will remain in my prayers.

**From Rachel Goossen, Associate Professor of History, Washburn University**

In terms of his university and community service, Loran was deeply involved in the regional History Day program. He served as a judge at our District 3 competition, held here at Washburn, for more than 25 years, and enjoyed interacting with hundreds of middle school students over the years who created and interpreted visual exhibits on a wide range of historical topics.

**From Margie Mersmann**

I took several of Dr. Smith's classes in the mid-80s and I want to share with you my favorite quote of his. I returned to college after my children had all left home so I was an older student on campus. He would always tell me to "beware of little old ladies in tennis shoes, as you will never win an argument with them." I went on to get my BA in history in 1985 and taught school until my sixty-eighth birthday. He was my favorite teacher, and I remember him fondly. Thanks for listening.

**From Michael R. Brooks, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, CVR Energy**

Sorry to hear about Dr. Smith. It was a pleasure to know him; he was always the first to put the students' education, welfare, and advancement above all else. I am fairly sure I would not have graduated without his counseling.

**FREDERICK MARSHALL WIRT**

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Fred Wirt—a leading scholar of American politics for 30 years and a pillar of integrity in the University of Illinois' department of political science over that same

span of time—died on August 21, 2009, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, at the age of 85.

Professor Wirt was born in Radford, Virginia, on July 27, 1924. He was the first in his family to graduate from high school, and at the age of 18 he enlisted in the U.S. Army. His service during World War II was not unique, but it was sufficiently noteworthy by any objective standard. As a tank commander in the European theatre he participated in the Battle of the Bulge after which he and his colleagues liberated the Mathausen extermination camp where they saw firsthand thousands of the dead and dying littering the landscape in that chamber of horror. Among those whom Fred Wirt and his comrades saved were Simon Wiesenthal, the intrepid Nazi hunter, and Itzhak Tarkay, the distinguished artist. This incident would burn in his consciousness for the remainder of his life. Such was its impact that for the first 40 years of his marriage, he was unable to share the experience with his wife. The 21-year-old, who to that moment had perhaps never even met a Jew, would become in later years a fierce antagonist of anyone who dared question whether the Holocaust had actually occurred. After his European tour of duty, Fred was slated for service in the Pacific Theatre, and he always said that President Truman's decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima spared him and countless others from having to storm the beaches of Honshu.

Upon his return to civilian life, Professor Wirt attended and graduated from DePauw University in 1948, where he met Betty Cook, whom he married in his junior year. Betty would be his staunchest and proudest supporter throughout the many challenges awaiting him in a marriage that stood the test of 62 years. He subsequently earned a Ph.D. in political science from The Ohio State University, and he often spoke of David Spitz, a star member of that faculty, in the most glowing terms. His dissertation on the government regulation of film censorship was eminently publishable, but I think Fred was simply thrilled to have the degree in hand after negotiating so many military and academic turnstiles and to get an opportunity to join a good teaching department. From 1952–1969, he was a member of the faculty at Denison University where he rose through the ranks and became a leading figure on campus.

Then lightning struck. Taking advantage of a 1967–1968 sabbatical leave, Professor Wirt established an affiliation with

Berkeley's Institute of Government Studies and underwent what he called a "mind-bending experience." His mentors were Aaron Wildavsky and Nelson Polsby. Over and over again, I heard him extol their virtues: breadth of knowledge and intellectual stature, ambition, strength of opinion, and power of personality. Their respect for him was confirmed by the fact that they subsequently arranged a three-year (1969–1972) appointment on his behalf at the institute. It is perhaps a coincidence that Spitz, Wildavsky, and Polsby were all Jewish. I'll never believe it.

One could undertake the deplorable exercise of judging Professor Wirt's contributions to the literature by counting the number of his books (19 if a broad constructionist) and the number of his articles and book chapters (over 50 if similarly inclined), as if he were presenting his career statistics to the Baseball Hall of Fame's selection committee. (Fred would find this an apt analogy; he was an exceptional baseball player in his youth, and I think he had a tryout with a minor league team.)

Better to consider the political climate during his Berkeley residency (1969–1972). The key domestic issue was race relations. The Supreme Court had ordered the public schools of the nation to desegregate and Congress had passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. What were the actual effects of these initiatives, of these public policies, Fred wanted to know. His desire to assess the place of African Americans in the public life of this nation flowed naturally from his need to appreciate the status and standing of Jews here and elsewhere. He began by co-editing a collection of essays entitled *Northern School Desegregation* (Chandler, 1968). Back then, though, the critical battlefield was the South, the home of George Wallace and his constituency. Fred made Panola County, Mississippi, his laboratory for studying the impact of civil rights legislation. Consider: here was a Cleveland-raised academic traveling to a hotbed of racial animosity to interview white folk about their attitudes and behaviors toward black folk, this at a moment when the bodies of other northern whites were turning up here and there in the Deep South. His monumental study, *Politics of Southern Equality* (Aldine, 1970), was officially designated by the American Political Science Association for honorable mention status in the 1971 Woodrow Wilson best book

competition. I should think so! Decades later, he would return to Panola County to reinvestigate the dynamics of political changes in his laboratory. That book, *We Ain't What We Was* (Duke University Press, 1997) captured the V.O. Key Award (named for the greatest of all political science commentators on the Southern scene) tendered to the best book on the politics of that region in 1998 by the Southern Political Science Association.

This was just the beginning. There followed a series of research studies on various aspects of state and local politics that are not so easy to categorize. One theme engaged processes and policies endemic to American urban life; others focused on education. An example of the former is *On the City's Rim* (Heath, 1972) in which he led a team of four social scientists reporting on the rise of the new suburbia. Not surprisingly, a critical parameter was race: to what extent were African Americans locked out of the latest version of the American demographic dream? An example of the latter is *Schools in Conflict* (McCutchan, 1982, 1989, 1992). Here, he joined Michael Kirst in what would prove to be a 25-year collaboration to examine the continuing and nagging question of what is right and what is wrong *politically* with American primary- and secondary-school preparation. Nor did they shortchange the variable role of the federal government in this equation. And yet his 10-year association with Willis Hawley, exemplified by their co-edited collection *The Search for Community Power* (Prentice Hall, 1968, 1974) takes us much further afield. What is an American political community? How do we locate and compare patterns of decision making in these communities? What are the budgetary control structures? How are the various economic interests balanced in these systems by public authorities? Of all of the

above, I find the most probative—the one likely to achieve the longest shelf life—to be *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco* (University of California Press, 1974). It takes its place alongside the famous New Haven research of those years as worthy of a two-week graduate seminar dialogue.

From 1972–1975, Professor Wirt held a professorship at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he was also director of that institution's fledgling Policy Sciences Graduate Program. Funding problems inspired him to move on to the University of Illinois where he was in residence for 25 years until his retirement in 2000. During his Urbana tenure he traveled extensively and delivered guest lectures in a number of universities abroad. One of his favorite locales was Australia, and he developed strong ties at the University of Melbourne. Another was London where he did extensive research in order to provide a comparative politics focus to the policy problems of interest to him.

Professor Wirt was not entirely at home in the academic culture of the last 20 years. He believed in political science in its broadest compass, and when I began the task of making connections between the world of genetics and the world of politics, I found a welcome voice of support from the oldest member of the department. A well-known political scientist once opined that our discipline has many capable analysts and few capable synthesizers. Fred Wirt was a synthesizer. He was also an empiricist but he wanted to capture the human equation in his research, and he was perfectly willing to go into work places, even homes, to get the real stories. For him abstract models and elegant mathematical proofs only tangentially tied to what real people were thinking and doing. He bemoaned the “normal science” specializa-

tion proliferating in our discipline. This estrangement carried over into social relationships. He and Betty prided themselves on hosting a once-a-year December cocktail party for their friends and colleagues. Eventually the custom petered out. Professors can't seem to manage anymore the daunting task of inviting their peers into their homes for food and drink. This would require them to take leave of the a-sociality of their offices and their beloved work stations.

Five years ago, at the age of 80, Fred Wirt, accompanied by Dianne Pinderhughes, soon to be chosen the first African American female president of the American Political Science Association, wrote a letter to University of Illinois authorities urging an investigation of the sad state of Jewish representation in our department. Fred and Dianne cited numbers showing the dramatic attenuation of Jewish membership in our ranks, and they observed that the political science department that loomed on the horizon could not possibly be the beehive of intellectual curiosity and disputation that is the hallmark of a leading community of political science scholarship. The ensuing investigation by these administrators was perfunctory and no action was forthcoming. Fred's vision would shortly become a reality.

Fittingly, Fred Wirt was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, a venue established to honor hero/warriors. He requested that any donations in his memory be directed to either the American Battle Monuments Commission or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My check to the latter in his name is in the mail.

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