

Memorial Moment for George Ross, 1940-2025  
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Laura Miller, Department of Sociology

George William Ross, the Morris Hillquit Professor Emeritus of Labor and Social Thought, died of stomach cancer on April 2 at the age of 84. He is survived by his wife Jane Jenson and many other family members, friends, and colleagues.

George earned his BA from Williams College, a Master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and in 1973, a PhD in Government from Harvard University.

George was someone with a formidable intellect, which resulted in a long trail of publications and awards. He did not suffer fools gladly, and frequently voiced his opinions on the matter. At the same time, he had a great sense of humor and considerable warmth, and was highly generous with praise and support of his students and colleagues.

He taught at Brandeis from 1970 to 2009, starting within the Sociology Department and then beginning a joint appointment in Sociology and Politics in 1997. He anchored the Sociology Department's strength in political sociology, teaching courses on that subject as well as social movements, the welfare state, and social theory. In Politics, he taught a variety of courses on European political systems and European integration.

George kept adding to his responsibilities. In 1998 he became the second director of the Center for German and European Studies at Brandeis, a position he held until 2008. He was also one of the faculty members who helped to launch the International and Global Studies program. Outside of Brandeis, he was active in Harvard's Center for European Studies since its earliest days. He had stints as its acting director, executive director of Harvard's European Union Center, chair of the European Union Studies Association, and chair of the Council for European Studies. And in between all this, he performed numerous local roles, including faculty representative to the Brandeis Board of Trustees, and two terms as Sociology Department chair.

His research interests included the politics of the French left, the political economy of the European Union, changing democracy in advanced industrial societies, and globalization and social structures. He was an author or editor of at least 15 books, some that saw multiple editions, plus numerous journal articles and book chapters. George became well known as a leading theorist of European integration. Among his many influential publications, his 1995 book, *Jacques Delors and European Integration* and his 2011 book, *The European Union and Its Crises* helped to shape the field of European Studies. Among his numerous honors, he was recognized in 2017 with the European Union Studies Association Award for Lifetime Achievement in European Studies.

Former students and colleagues recall the great wisdom and good humor he brought to their interactions. As one said, he showed how to collaborate in governing even at times when the situation or people may have seemed ungovernable.

If I remember correctly, George was on leave during my first semester at Brandeis. But once he was back, I soon discovered that despite our very different areas of teaching and research, there was always much for us to talk about, whether it be the state of the world or the state of the university. As an assistant professor, with all the uncertainties that brings, I consistently felt like George had my back. Even when I doubted my own abilities, I never doubted his confidence in me, which was a real gift.

Upon his retirement from Brandeis, George moved to Montreal where he was awarded a Chaire Jean Monnet *ad personam* at the University of Montreal, an appointment that honors distinguished international contributions to the understanding of European integration. He continued to stay busy with scholarship, frequent trips to Europe, and lots of skiing in the winters.

George cared deeply about Brandeis, and even after he retired, he kept tabs on university affairs. Frequently after some blow-up on campus, I'd receive an email from him asking, what the hell is going on! He would take in the news, offer some sarcastic but usually on-the-mark comments – and then he'd express his faith in those of us here to figure it all out and do the right thing.

Last year after another member of the Sociology Department, Peter Conrad, died, I sent George a message letting him know. He replied expressing sorrow at the news and with a characteristically George remark: Peter was one of the good ones. The same holds so true for George: he was one of the good ones and many, many people benefited from his work, his keen insights about the world, and his friendship.