

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
Robert Agranoff
(1936-2019)

For more than 50 years, Professor Emeritus Robert Agranoff was a leading scholar and practitioner of politics, providing a groundbreaking intellectual bridge between political science and public administration to insure good governance for leaders and citizens. Research and practice are intertwined inconvertibly, in his view, and the ultimate measure of one's work in academia is the extent to which positive and productive change in society is informed by that work. The theme of Bob's work and life reflected, in his words, "a sensitivity to the world of theoretical understanding linked to practice."

Bob joined the faculty of SPEA (now the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs) in 1980, after spending 14 years in the public administration division of the department of political science at Northern Illinois University (NIU). From his pre-college years in the U.S. Navy as a hematology technician to his final year at SPEA in 2001 as the school's associate dean, Bob was a keen observer of human behavior in organizations. He understood that there was a lot going on in politics and governance not revealed in the *New York Times* or in popular press books on government. He made it his life's work to learn how politics and governance operate in practice.

While studying political science as an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls (B.S., 1962, political science and economics), Bob became involved in student government and political campaigns. He worked extensively with the Democratic (Democratic Farmer Labor/DFL) party in Minnesota and his doctoral work at the University of Pittsburgh (M.A., 1963; Ph.D., 1967, political science) involved on-the-ground research while in residence at the party headquarters. He gained additional practical experience when he took a leave from NIU during his third year on the faculty and became the full-time legislative affairs director at the state headquarters and then served as the party's lobbyist at the state legislative session. His administrative experience with the DFL party guided the rest of his career.

Early in his career, Bob published two major books on campaign management: an edited volume, *The New Style in Election Campaigns*, in 1972 on the technical, organizational, and communications changes that had transformed political parties and *The Management of Election Campaigns* in 1976. Bob's research on campaigning convinced him that legislators had great ideas for new legislation, but little sense of the vast implementation chain involving many different entities that new programs required. Bob's fundamental and life-long concern for tightening the theory-practice linkage was expressed in the preface of his 1976 book:

Too often the practitioner has ignored the academic as unconcerned with the real experiences and problems that politicians confront on a day-to-day basis.

The academic, in turn, has dismissed the practitioner as concerned only with parochial and peripheral matters.

Bob was seemingly always ahead of the scholarly curve. He nearly single-handedly created a major new subfield in public administration—public administration as an intergovernmental and interorganizational administrative phenomenon. His early research in human services administration and then in city government demonstrated both the value and the difficulties of integrating and coordinating services across levels of government. His most important and recognized contributions are in the study of intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration in networks, now known as “collaborative public management.”

The culmination of this work, *Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments* (co-authored with Michael McGuire), was honored with both the 2003 Louis Brownlow Book Award from the National Academy of Public Administration and the 2014 Martha Derthick Book Award from the American Political Science Association for “the best book on federalism and intergovernmental relations published at least 10 years ago that has made a lasting contribution to the study of federalism and intergovernmental relations.” Other research in the field of collaborative administrative networks includes his 2007 book, *Managing within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations*, which was recognized with two best book awards: one from the Section on Public Administration Research from the American Society for Public Administration and one from the Public and Nonprofit Management section from the Academy of Management.

Bob maintained an active research career even after he retired, publishing six books and dozens of articles during that period, outperforming many of his non-retired SPEA colleagues. Also during this period, he received multiple lifetime achievement awards, including being elected as a fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration.

Professor Agranoff inspired students to take up the call of public service. He chaired and served on scores of dissertation committees for students at IU and through his more than twenty-year association as a senior faculty in the Government and Public Administration Program at Instituto Universitario, Fundación Ortega y Gasset, in Madrid, Spain. At O’Neill, he also directed the Ph.D. programs in public affairs and public policy.

His dedication to the nexus of theory and practice is exemplified also by his extraordinary professional service. He served on the editorial boards of no fewer than 15 journals and as chair or member of numerous professional and research associations committees. His extensive public administration and public service consultancies included federal, state, and local government agencies, such as U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, and the National Science Foundation; many nonprofit organizations; universities; foundations; and graduate programs at various institutions.

He also made significant contributions to the Bloomington community over more than 40 years, serving on boards of organizations addressing concerns such as mental health, development disabilities, autism, rehabilitation, youth, and aging. His genuine concern for the successful planning and delivery of government programs was not just the centerpiece of his research. Like the old “pol” that he was, he helped steer these and other organizations toward greater effectiveness. His life is a model for engaged scholars worldwide.

I request that this memorial tribute to Robert Agranoff be presented to the members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that it be preserved in its minutes and archive, and that after its presentation copies be sent to members of his family.

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