

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
ARTHUR P. COLADARCI
(1917 - 1991)

Arthur P. Coladarci, Academic Secretary to the University, Professor Emeritus of Education and Psychology, and former Dean of the School of Education, died on January 16, 1991 while undergoing emergency heart surgery. He was 73. Shortly before his death he had completed the Minutes of the Academic Senate Meeting held the previous week, and characteristically, they were charmingly written, with jokes at the expense of his friends including a quotation to the effect that common sense is frequently attacked in Academic Senate Meetings – as usual, Art had the last laugh over his colleagues. He was the University’s fourth Academic Secretary, and he brought to that position a style of recording its business for posterity that made its Minutes as unique in their shrewd humor as they were exemplary for accuracy and completeness. Though coming to this position after twenty years of norms had been laid down, he was not daunted by the style of his predecessors – with great but never frivolous wit, he brought a humanity to the written record that will engage even the most dour of readers for as long as that record is examined. But service as Academic Secretary was merely the last in an impressive list of ways Art Coladarci served the Stanford community.

The eldest of four children born to immigrant Italian parents, Art was something of a trailblazer; he was proud of his ethnic heritage, but he was also determined not to be constricted by it – he chose to enter college rather than to follow his father’s advice and become a member of the work force as soon as possible. He graduated with an Ed.B. from Western Connecticut State College in 1940, and after a period of teaching he served as a paratroop officer from 1942-1946. In 1947 he took his M.A. from Yale, where he also received his doctorate in Educational Psychology in 1950. During this period he supported himself as a part-time Instructor in Psychology in nearby colleges. His first full-time position was at Indiana University, and he

moved to Stanford as an Associate Professor in 1952. By 1967 he was Associate Dean of the School of Education; he set as his main task the tightening of standards and increasing the rigor of doctoral training. (The Committee which he headed – the Committee on Advanced Graduate Degrees [CAGD] was better known to students as “Coladarci and God Decide.”)

Art’s ascension to the Deanship in 1970 coincided with the recognition of the School as being preeminent in the United States, a position it held during his nine years of leadership and on down to the present. He continued the efforts of his predecessor, and recruited to Stanford a variety of top educational researchers and teachers, many of whom were also noted more widely for their work in the social sciences and related fields. After stepping down in 1979, Art returned to teaching, concentrating on helping doctoral students with their writing; and in 1988 he became Academic Secretary to the University.

His own areas of research and writing were broad. He was the author of the book *Educational Psychology*, and author or coauthor of several volumes on statistics – *Statistics for Teachers*, *Statistical Reasoning and Procedures*, and *Descriptive Statistics* (this last book being co-authored with his son Theodore, a Stanford Ph.D. graduate). He contributed several influential journal articles aimed at improving educational research. And he was active in the international scene – he served as director of the Hilo (Hawaii) language development project, executive director of the Stanford-Tokyo study of postwar education in Japan, and consultant to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Nepalese Ministry of Education, and the Spanish Ministry of Education; he also worked on educational improvement in Nigeria, Brazil, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

His non-academic interests were even wider. A good violinist when young, he later became proficient at Western guitar; he was a horseman, and served as President of the San Mateo Horsemen’s Association – and in 1970 he won the California Distinguished Horseman’s Award; he also served on the San Mateo Mounted Patrol for many years. In recent years, too, he had several terms of distinguished service on the San Mateo Grand Jury. In addition, he liked Italian opera and he loved to cook. But those who knew him will always remember him as a warm and open human being, who was ever-willing to listen to, and discuss with, friends and critics alike (inhabitants of the Cubberley building during the period of his Deanship will recall that his office door leading to the main corridor was almost

always wide open); they will also remember him as a superb raconteur and occasional prankster. His humor was rarely merely humor – it almost always had a point. He loved to attack “sacred cows,” and to undermine pomposity; and he never exempted himself from this process – he had an astounding collection of “Dean” and “Italian” jokes, which he used to convey that he didn’t quite take himself as seriously as might seem. He was as likely to glue his secretary’s telephone handset to its base as he was to send the Dean of the Harvard School of Education a tee-shirt with the number “6” clearly emblazoned on it (to rub in the fact that a recent national survey had placed that institution sixth while Stanford retained its top ranking); and he was not above reminding his colleagues that Hercules had been given the task of cleaning the manure out of the Augean stables – and our job, as educational researchers, was not to fill them up again.

Arthur Coladarci is survived by his wife Jane, his son Theodore and daughter Katherine, two grandchildren, his sister Urcelia and his brother Peter.

Denis Phillips, Chair

Ray Bacchetti

Richard Snow

George Spindler