

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

LEWIS B. MAYHEW (1917 – 1992)

Stanford Education Professor Emeritus Lewis B. Mayhew, an early leader in higher education research and a gifted teacher, died September 30, 1992, at his Stanford campus home. He was 75. Mayhew, who joined the Stanford education faculty in 1962, was often controversial. During much of his long career, he was an outspoken critic of higher education, which he said too often abandoned its primary role of teaching, and instead was becoming overwhelmed by research demands and a corporate-style bureaucracy.

Mayhew practiced what he preached. He gave unstintingly of his time and effort to students—both in his office and in his home. In the words of a colleague, Mayhew always realized that education was not a business but a human undertaking. He held his students in great affection, and was an advisor to many of them throughout his life.

Lew Mayhew was an expert on higher educational history and change. In an age when higher-education scholars were moving increasingly to quantitative studies of higher-education issues, Mayhew took a qualitative approach. Trained as a military historian (he spent five-and-a-half years in the Army in the United States and the European Theater, moving from the rank of second lieutenant to major), Mayhew viewed the processes of change of colleges and universities as subject to both the actions of others as well as the tactical decisions of their leaders. He felt most comfortable writing case studies of institutions that were extraordinary in some way. Why did certain colleges and universities that were otherwise equal at one point in history experience different fortunes in their status and success? Why did some prosper while others did not?

Mayhew believed that the quality of leadership was a crucial element in the success or failure of an institution, and he studied leadership strategies as would a military historian. In many cases, he would attempt to predict the future evolution of specific groups of institutions by interviewing key personnel and observing institutional practices. More "modern" researchers had long discounted this approach to studying higher educational institutions in favor of statistical modeling of organizational behavior. As often as not, Mayhew's predictions were far closer to the mark, a fact that was a great source of personal pride.

Mayhew was chairman of the School of Education's Administration and Policy Analysis (APA) program for close to a decade, during which he reconceptualized and overhauled the program. Under Mayhew, Stanford created a core-course sequence that interlocked and blended social science concepts with applied administrative skills. Mayhew also stressed the historical and philosophical views of administration. The core curriculum included students interested in elementary/secondary education, higher education, and policy analysis. It created a close-knit student cohort that could choose from a more applied Ed.D. doctoral dissertation or the more theoretical Ph.D. The core curriculum was the basis of an interdisciplinary doctoral qualifying exam that Mayhew developed over several years.

Mayhew was a tireless administrator who met with students frequently on their individual needs. He was flexible and sensitive, yet believed in common curriculum content and explicit standards. In his final years at Stanford, he led a student seminar concerned with the declining quality of higher education, which was focused on standards for the undergraduate curriculum in all types of colleges and universities.

Mayhew received his Ph.D. in History from Michigan State University in 1952, where he remained as a member of the faculty until he came to Stanford. From 1957-74, he also served as part-time director of research at St. Stephens College in Columbia, Mo. He was a prolific writer, even by Stanford standards: more than fifty books and hundreds of articles on higher education in the United States. These include contributions that are considered to be milestones in the study of graduate and professional education and the small liberal arts college-subjects on which he is commonly cited.

Mayhew was a consultant to more than 500 institutions, and served on many regional and national committees, including the Educational Testing Service Board Committee on Test Development and the Senior Commission of the Western Colleges Association. He was also consultant to the White House Conference on Education during Lyndon B. Johnson's administration and a former president of the American Association for Higher Education.

He is survived by his wife, Estelle, and his children, Lewis Mayhew of Modesto, Madeline Mayhew of Sunnyvale, Robert Mayhew of Pleasant Hill and an informally adopted daughter, Trudy Growe of Sunnyvale.

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