



Cornell University
ILR School

ILR Memory Book Series

From time to time, on-line memory books are made available on the web site of Cornell University's ILR School as a way for past students, colleagues, and friends to post their recollections of faculty and distinguished staff members. The occasion for the memory book may be the person's passing, or it may mark their retirement from active service to the school.

This series collects the comments left by visitors to these memory books.

John Windmuller

1923-2003

John Windmuller received his doctorate in industrial and labor relations from Cornell in 1951—one of the first granted by the school—the same year he was appointed to the ILR School faculty. In 1983 he was named the Martin P. Catherwood Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations.



Windmuller took a special interest in the operation of labor organizations, employers' associations, and collective bargaining systems, and he contributed to the development of international programs and activities in the ILR School.

He wrote and edited numerous books, among them *Collective Bargaining in Industrial Market Economies: A Reappraisal* (ILO, 1987), and was published widely in scholarly journals. He was awarded a silver medal from the government of the Netherlands in 1970 for his book, *Labor Relations in the Netherlands*.

After being named professor emeritus in 1987, he continued to teach his comparative labor relations course for several years by popular demand.

Visitors to the memory book for John Windmuller made the following comments between December 6, 2003 and June 9, 2004.

My deepest condolences to the bereaved family. Reinhold (Rene Tajoburg)

- Reinhold Beuer-Tajovsky, Newport News, VA Dec 12 2003

The I&LR School curriculum is very structured, and for my first elective course during my sophomore year ('70-71) I elected Prof. Windmuller's Comparative Industrial Relations Systems I. (I later completed the sequence with Prof. Galenson's course II). I found the subject matter of labor relations in various countries and world regions extremely interesting, taught by the expert. Several years later, in my job with a labor union in the entertainment industry, I was in frequent work-related contact with one Betsey Windmuller. Because of my interest in last names and my own family research, I had to ask Betsey if she was related to Professor Windmuller - despite her California location, not the most common last name. My instincts were right; she was his daughter, and was raised in Ithaca. Into my 26th year with my employer, I still deal with Betsey, now Betsey Roberts, who has kept me informed about her father, whom I saw at the last Cornell reunion I attended (my 25th 5 yrs ago). I was very sad to learn of his illness and passing, and sorry that I only elected one course taught by him. A significant part of my work is actually in his field, as I deal with labor unions and/or associations in not only the U.S. but also Canada, Ireland, England, Australia, and New Zealand, and have watched some of them become major institutions in the entertainment industry in their own country. I look forward to continued contact with the Windmuller family and hope to be able to be in Ithaca on February 15.

- James H. Kaye, Harrison, N.Y. Jan 7 2004

I first met Prof. Windmuller and his wife when I was fourteen working in the dining rooms at Kendal at Ithaca. I truly enjoyed getting to know both of them. Now that I am an ILR student, it has been wonderful to see his presence still alive in ILR.

- Sarah Sutphin, Ithaca, NY Jan 27 2004

I took several of Prof. Windmuller's classes as a graduate student in the early 1960s. Many of my peers thought him humorless and spent their class periods with him feverishly taking notes on his beautifully crafted lectures. One day as I paused from my note-taking it dawned on me that he had just uttered an extremely witty remark, albeit straight-faced. So I started listening more and taking notes less. I soon discovered I learned far more that way and that Prof. Windmuller had a fabulous wit. He inspired me to make the study of labor and other social movements one of my specialties as a sociology professor.

- Charles S. Green, III, Farrington Village, NC Feb 3 2004

I met him for the first time in New Delhi, India, in the year 1964 when he had come as a Consultant to the Government of India. Then I met him several times in Ithaca, NY when I was a student of MILR at NYSSI&LR (1966). He was indeed a true friend, philosopher and guide and it is because of him that I came to USA for MILR in the year 1964. He alone encouraged and helped me. I will be in Washington, DC after 20th February, 2004. God Bless him. Thanks. Shri Krishna Joshi 179 Gulmohar Enclave New Delhi-110 049, India Telephone Nos. 26855183 or 26515538 E-mail: nirmala.joshi@att.net

- Joshi Shri Krishna, Presently in New Delhi (India) Feb 4 2004

On behalf of all of the FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF OSE-USA, I wish to express our deep sense of loss. We send our sincere condolences to Ruth and all the Windmuller family. A gift in John's memory has been made to our association.

- Norbert Bikales, Rockville, MD Feb 11 2004

I was saddened to hear of the death of Professor John Windmuller and wanted to convey what a wonderful professor, friend and role model he has been for both my husband, Richard B. Hoffman (ILR'67) and me (ILR'69). It was through his gentle kindness and probing lectures in international and comparative labor relations and his work as a distinguished scholar that I became entranced with that field and eventually was able to put so many of the ideas he expounded into practice by working with the US Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service as part of its international/ADR department and meeting with labor unions, management associations, government, and international bodies like the ILO, World Bank, and NGOs, to help develop democratic institutions. We have kept up with Prof Windmuller and his family and were always so pleased to see him at ILR alumni and faculty events. Prof. Windmuller knew about "globalization" before it became the keynote issue facing American unions and this country. I took as many of his classes as I could and also spent time in this field in London and in graduate school. I have Cornell ILR, and especially Professor Windmuller to thank for my successes in the international field and Professor Jean McKelvey for my work in mediation and dispute resolution. They were my inspiration and they will be missed. The pioneers of the early ILR School have certainly made their mark. Sincerely, Eileen Barkas Hoffman

- Eileen Barkas Hoffman ILR'69, Washington, DC Feb 15 2004

Dr. Windmuller was the personification of a "gentleman and a scholar." It was amazing how a man so talented and learned could be so unassuming. He was a major influence not merely on my undergraduate career, but in how I view the world decades later. I sincerely hope we will all continue to try to live up to his example.

- Matthew Palumbo, Kent, CT Feb 21 2004

My sincere condolences to John's family. I actually never met John, but I knew him through my decades in the Bureau of International Labor Affairs. We shared an interest in the developments affecting international trade union organizations. I phoned with John many times over the years and benefited from his wise counsel, as well as his writings. I am also aware that he was a great and beloved teacher because I have run across several of his students as colleagues of mine in the labor field, some of whom I recognize on this page. John made a great contribution, was obviously a wonderful teacher, and will be missed and remembered by many around the globe.

- Gerald P. Holmes, Annandale, VA Mar 15 2004

I have fond memories of Prof. Windmuller for whom I was a teaching assistant at one point in my graduate studies. I remember how he stood up for me when I gave a student a D on a final exam. The student appealed to Prof. Windmuller who called me to his office to discuss the matter. (Of course unseasoned graduate student TAs are often notoriously tough on undergrads.) Prof. Windmuller suggested that I read the essay answers outloud to see if perhaps I had missed something and that maybe a higher grade could be awarded. When I finished reading, he took off his glasses and said quietly, "I think perhaps you've been too generous."

- Frances Anne Hardin, Washington, DC Mar 15 2004

I can not bear to erase John's picture from my screen. While I did not know John like that in his mature prime years, this superb photo pictures him as I see him in my mind: totally attentive, reflective, empathetic, and responsive. Were I only catholic and could believe that somewhere in the future Ernst and John and I could meet and discuss as of old. Love to Ruth again. ernst

- Ernst S. Valfer, Berkeley, CA Apr 12 2004

I never planned a career in international labor relations, but have been working overseas for the AFL-CIO for 11 years. The teaching of Professor Windmuller has helped me often along the way.

- Rudy Porter, Jakarta, Indonesia May 9 2004

Prof. Windmuller was the single most important academic in my undergraduate career. I learned, from him, to do detailed and careful research and to write clearly. The culturally relativistic structure he taught was key to our understanding of international labor relations. He was very supportive of my interest in the field and was an informal advisor when my career lead me to the International division of the U.S. Department of Labor and to work for the Ministry of Labor of Brazil for the World Bank. Even when I moved over to finance (post-MBA) I stayed in touch with him and learned from him. He was a true gentleman and a scholar.

- Miriam May, Newton, Mass. Feb 4 2004

Shortly after John died, I sent the message below out to a network of American and international colleagues. Responses came from all over the world, from former students, colleagues and friends, demonstrating both the vast influence and great affection that Professor Windmuller inspired. Dear Colleagues, Please take a moment to honor the memory of mentor and colleague John Windmuller. He and his wife Ruth escaped from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, came to America, and ended up putting together an extraordinarily rich and successful life here in Ithaca over the past 55 (!) years. For our field, John kept comparative and international industrial relations alive with his consistently insightful contributions during the postwar years of American centrism, at a time when comparative industrial relations almost died (especially in the 1970s and 1980s). He was a terrific and popular teacher, and when it came time for him to "retire," he did so but kept on teaching his comparative course once a year by popular demand. From my personal point of view, not only did John bequeath to me his office (complete with the historic curtains that Ruth installed several decades ago), he also gave insightful advice on both teaching and research and most importantly inspired me with his lifelong commitment to international

and comparative teaching and research. He was also a warm and pleasant human being, with a good sense of humor and uncommon common sense bred from a life of struggle, hard work and accomplishment. Although many of you may never have met him, he is in a very real sense a mentor to all of us interested in international affairs -- for keeping international and comparative labor studies alive, laying the groundwork for the new push in comparative political economy in the 1970s toward the literature on corporatism (for which his work on comparative labor federation centralization was an especially important contribution) and its current influential incarnation as “varieties of capitalism.” In so doing, he provided an important foundation on which our own current teaching and research here at Cornell and beyond is built -- in comparative labor studies, global governance, wide-ranging debates on international labor standards, and in similar work in which so many other colleagues and practitioners are engaged today. He was a quiet, sensitive man who made an enormous impact on the drive toward better global understandings and the better world that we all hope can result from such insight and awareness. With great respect and in loving memory,

- Lowell Turner, Ithaca Mar 17 2004

I will remember John Windmuller with gratitude for being probably the one person -- outside of my family -- who has had the most dramatic and direct influence on the course of my life, professionally and, as a result, personally. As an undergraduate in 1978, I took Professor Windmuller's course in comparative industrial relations. He was instrumental in matching me with an ILR alumnus, Efren Cordova, who arranged for an internship in his department in the International Labor Office in Geneva in the summer of 1978. Being surprised to learn of an area of common research interest stemming from that summer, Professor Windmuller took me on as a research assistant the year after, with a view to co-authoring a paper. At a certain stage, Professor Windmuller withdrew from the project, but encouraged me to continue on with the writing until the paper was published in a Canadian journal the year later. Those first contacts with the ILO lead to my being recruited to a post in 1986, a career with the Organization in Geneva and Harare until 1996, settling down in Denmark and a private international labour law consultancy practice since then. Without John Windmuller, this course of events would not have occurred. I join with the others who have written here to remember him with great respect and fondness for his way of being, and for the directly instrumental role he has played in so many lives.

- David Tajgman, Aarhus, Denmark Jun 9 2004

While organizations such as Cornell understand that they are blessed by great intellects with the ability to pass on their wisdom to others, the recipients sometimes need to be reminded of this fact. In a soundbite world where so little is either memorable or of lasting importance, Professor Windmuller's contributions over his long tenure at Cornell should be celebrated. Those in my generation who were fortunate enough to take a class, discuss a thesis topic or break bread with John are better for the experience, and I know they are all grateful for his time, attention and devotion to learning. My parents (Professor Emeritus) Frank and Charlene Miller have cherished a half-century friendship with John and Ruth, and we all mourn his passing.

- Brian Miller Arts '79, Greenwich CT Jan 22 2004

John was a very unassuming person, a very quiet & gentle man. We were on the “St. Louis” together, although I never met him there, & then in Montmorency, France. When he & Ruth moved to Ithaca I was a frequent guest & enjoyed his nightly piano interludes before dinner. He & ILR grew from quonset hut to the brand new building. He is leaving a big void at home as well as in school.

- Jane I. Keibel (*Inge Goldschmidt*), Kew Gardens, NY 11415 Feb 25 2004

I remember John from Montintin as a very bright and friendly youngster. We met a few times here at some functions for Ernst Papanek. I deeply touched by his passing but his memory will linger. Yvonne Hartwich nee Goldberg

- Yvonne Hartwich, 2000 Linwood #20GFt. Lee, N.J. 07024 Dec 6 2003

John was one of the children from the St. Louis German Ship which was refused entry into the United States and Cuba. We at the OSE referred to the group as the Cubaners. John was brilliant and a natural leader and a very talented musician. We enjoyed his and Ruth's attendance to our 1989 OSE reunion in Los Angeles. Our condolences to the family. Henry and Anita Schuster

- Henry D. Schuster, Las Vegas, NV 89129 Dec 6 2003

I was only 13 yrs old when John and his brother came to us in Montintin. Even at our young ages we often spoke of John as a true friend, who could make everyone feel special. His leadership, his musical talent and his wonderful personality was so unique. I had the privilege to meet with him at the University of Chicago, where we met at the Law Library and spent a few all too brief moments together. It was very special to me. I consider myself very fortunate to have had John as part of my life even though it was for a short time only. My condolences to his family.

- Elfriede Schloss, nee Meyer, San Diego Dec 6 2003

My profound condolences to Ruth and their children. John was my best friend and most influential peer in France, specially after we moved to Montintin. His maturity, judgement, and intellect relative to most of the rest of us was a model for me. As the Chair of the Presidents' Council of the three homes, he was a model of insightful and moderating leadership. We read together texts and advanced material which neither of us really understood, but we had fun trying to make sense of it. His musical abilities were an uplift to us all, and I was deeply moved when he got up in the middle of the night to play the piano. He was one of the very few who did not seek refuge in near total denial of our precarious situation. I was only able to visit once in Ithaca and missed being able to visit more often. The phone was a poor substitute for being together with this warm, charming and highly intelligent friend. I will miss him intensely.

- Ernst Valfer, Berkeley, CA Dec 8 2003

Windmuller's work was important to my research on "International Labor Organizations" for the Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Science, published by Elsevier, in which I deal with the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats as well as the ILO.

- Sumner M. Rosen, New York, N.Y. 10024 Dec 10 2003

Dear Ruth, Tom & Betsy: I like to remember John in the early days of the School, when we were both beginning our academic careers. He had a wonderful if quiet sense of humor, and set a standard of disciplined effort none of us could ever attain. In my laborious effort to learn piano I also learned how good he was at the keyboard, especially on Mozart. Given the travails of displacement his was a fine example of the human spirit. Bob

- Robert, Ithaca, NY Dec 12 2003

I was saddened to learn of Professor Windmuller's death. I chose him as my principal advisor when I started my M.S. program in the fall of 1953. I may have been one of the first to have chosen him as their faculty advisor, since he had gotten his PhD only in 1951. I will always consider him the professor who had the most profound effect on my life. Through his working with my on my master's thesis (Unity in the American Labor Union, 1955), I learned critical thinking! I learned never to leave a statement by anyone unchallenged. I would footnote someone, then he'd say "what did Selig Perlman say about that?" or "what did Norman Ware say about that?" When I gave him the first draft of my thesis, it came back with more red than black ink on the page! I was destroyed, but then picked up the pieces as he helped me put together the intellectual competence to complete my thesis (one week after the AFL and CIO executive councils agreed to merge!) and get my M.S. in 1955. I can't tell you how many times during my life I have thought about him and his great contribution to my life at a critical time. He was a remarkable man, and I treasure the fact that I had his guidance for two years. I last visited him on campus in the spring of 1983. He was always so gracious. I attribute what success I've had in my life to having his guidance. I will miss this man who had such an influence on my life. Myron Miller, M.S. 1955

- Myron M. Miller, Chapel Hill, North Carolina Dec 12 2003

Prof. Windmuller was a quintessential critical thinker, and he shared that gift with us--his students. There was little more that we could have asked of him or that he could have given us.

- Larry Carbone, New York, NY Dec 13 2003

I was sad to hear of Prof. Windmuller's passing. As a student, I greatly enjoyed his classes and writings. I remember his book on labor relations in the Netherlands, which, although written more than 30 years ago, is still seen by many as the authoritative book on the subject (I still have that book in my office). I also remember well his kindness and support, which, as an older (and foreign) student returning to university was crucial in keeping perspective and "my eye on the ball." To this day, I remember Prof. Windmuller as one of my best professors at Cornell.

- Robert Hagedoorn, Olney, MD Dec 14 2003

Thank you for holding Prof. Windmuller's memory alive.

- *Tim Sheard, Brooklyn Dec 22 2003*

Thirty years after leaving graduate school, what stays in your mind is the impressions and thoughts of a few great professors. Their intellect opens a new world for you. At the ILR School, I was fortunate enough to encounter a number of great professors. Windmuller was one. He was insightful and brilliant and he challenged you. Years later, I was fortunate enough to work with his daughter, Betsy. She is an executive with our Pension Fund. My condolences to her and her mother.

- *John McLean, Los Angeles Jan 9 2004*

My first couple of years at the ILR school were not my best years. At times I felt the experiences and curriculum too narrow. I wondered whether my education would be relevant should I decide I wasn't cut out to be a human resources manager or labor attorney or any of a number of professions popular with ILR graduates. In short, I had doubts, and I was lost. And then I took a comparative and international labor relations class with Professor Windmuller. And I was fascinated. The history, the cultural studies, the broad focus from a specialized point of view all helped me learn what may have been the most important lesson I ever took from an ILR course. That a discipline isn't inherently narrow, just its application. Nearly twenty years later, I still remember the discussions of late nineteenth century guild formation, British and French labor federations and their impact on modern European labor markets and structure. And to this day, I read about the world, I think about the world, I talk about the world, I travel about the world. Thank you, Professor Windmuller.

- *Daniel Ogawa, San Francisco Jan 11 2004*

It was just over 20 years ago that I left Cornell. I was a librarian in Catherwood Library. Dr. Windmuller was a joy to work for and work with. He was such a font of knowledge and a ready and willing aid to us. We regularly used him as a resource. More important, he very willingly accommodated our requests.

- *Harold Way, Overland Park, Kansas Jan 16 2004*

I took several undergraduate courses in comparative labor relations with Prof. Windmuller and have retained a lifelong interest in history partly as a result of his teachings. Although he did not know me well, he was always very gracious and freely gave of his time as I pursued other academic and career objectives later in life with his assistance. I recall with great fondness his classes and always regarded him as one of my greatest teachers. Although his passing is sad, he led a full and rich life and left behind many wonderful memories for many others. Obviously, he will be greatly missed.

- *Gary Dulberg, ILR '79, Lafayette, California Feb 4 2004*

While active at Cornell, John was always a source of impeccable information. I knew that when I asked him a question in his area of expertise about a manuscript being edited for the ILR Review, I would get a prompt response and that it would have been carefully thought through. I could always depend on John. I respected him enormously and was delighted to have him as a friend.

- Elaine Gruenfeld Goldberg, Bala Cynwyd, PA Feb 4 2004

I have two particularly vivid memories of John. The first is that he and Ruth were, after Maurice and Hinda Neufeld, the first members of the ILR School to invite my family to their home. Sarah and I have always appreciated this graciousness. My second memory is that John was the person in my department from whom I most often asked advice. I valued his experience and his judgment. Along the same line, when he spoke at faculty meetings, I respected what he said.

- Michael Gold, Ithaca Feb 15 2004

I am quite sure I never met John on the "SS St. Louis", but I remember him well from Montmorency & La Tourelle - the homes where the children from the "St. Louis" were placed. I remember him playing the piano, playing ball and taking a general leadership role among the boys. We met again in New York and later in Ithaca, and he was certainly an individual who left his mark - he'll be missed by all who knew him.

- Alice Oster(Lore Goldschmidt), Kew Gardens, NY Feb 29 2004

I met John Windmuller as a first-year graduate student in September 1958, and also served as one of his graduate assistants. John was a serious but very understanding boss, and provided much needed constructive guidance. A kind man, John invited me and 3 or 4 other non-American students to his home to celebrate Thanksgiving. The dinner was excellent, and John served wine with the meal. After offering a second glass of wine to each adult, one of John's children said "Why don't you finish the wine, Daddy, you always do." John simply smiled and had another glass of wine. I always called John "The gentleman professor." - Douglas Reid, MILR '60, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, PanAmSat, Wilton, CT; 2/5/04

- Douglas Reid, Fairfield, Connecticut Feb 5 2004

Always remembered as a distinguished scholar, a great teacher, and a good friend. Sincere condolences.

- Bernie Miller MS '70, Halifax, Canada Feb 6 2004

John has been one of our Resident Emeritus professors within ILR for a number of years, and shared office space within the Program on Employment and Disability (PED). PED staff would like to send our warm thoughts and condolences to Professor Windmuller's family. His presence will be missed in our environment.

- Susanne Bruyere, Ithaca, New York Feb 13 2004

People come and go but your memories last forever! Always remember the professor.

- Wilhelmina Kirnon, Brooklyn, New York Apr 3 2004