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Dr. James E. Bruno, UCLA Professor of Education, Dies at 65

Dr. James E. Bruno, UCLA professor of education and one of the founding faculty of UCLA's Education Studies Minor program, died July 11 of cancer. He was 65.

Bruno's scholarship centered on issues dealing with students and teachers in large urban school districts, with special emphasis on the development of effective school administrative, leadership and planning policies and practices. Specifically, his research focused on quantitative methods, operations research, and the mathematical modeling of educational policy and planning issues, technology-based assessment procedures to support instructional programs, and psychosocial and economic perspectives dealing with the subject of time.

"Professor Bruno's death is a great loss to us all. He was dedicated to, and achieved, bringing out the best in every student, and he was an enormously creative and energetic scholar," said Aimée Dorr, dean of UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.

Bruno joined UCLA as an assistant professor of education in 1968. He authored 10 books and monographs, wrote more than 100 articles and made more than 280 professional presentations during his illustrious 38-year academic career.

His book "It's About Time: Leading School Reform in an Era of Time Scarcity" (1997) investigated the role of time in student and teacher behaviors in educational organizations.

"Jim was a true modern Renaissance intellect, a highly individualistic life force who had the vision and the courage to pursue research and innovation no matter how untraveled the pathway or how poorly lit," said UCLA education professor Marilyn Kourilsky. "He epitomized passion and love for family, ideas and knowledge—a passion that he generously shared with others and a passion that could literally sweep one along by its sheer intensity."

Bruno was a major force behind the creation and continued success of the Education Studies Minor program at the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. His passion for systemically improving education outcomes for all K–12 students shone through his research, teaching and mentoring.

2-2-2 Dr. James E. Bruno

A beloved professor, Bruno received the education department's Distinguished Teaching Award in 2003.

“Though his family and his work were his two main priorities, in that order, he cultivated many personal interests outside the university as well,” said close friend and former student Carl Lager, an assistant professor in the department of education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. “In addition to whipping up great Italian food from scratch, he was a Stradivarius-inspired violin maker and violinist, a diver, an East Coast swing dancer, a furniture maker, a model train hobbyist, a softball player, a pianist, a palm reader and a huge fan of Frank Sinatra, Mickey Mantle and the Yankees.

“With each interest, he always found ways to encourage his family and friends to participate with him. In short, he modeled a healthy life-work balance that is glaringly missing today.”

Bruno is survived by his wife, Ann, and their two daughters, Jenny and Julia. A private memorial service has been held, and a memorial celebration is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 12, at 2 p.m., at the UCLA Faculty Center.