MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Meyer Brownstone
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
Faculty of Arts and Science
University of Toronto

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Faculty of Arts & Science deeply regrets the passing of Meyer Brownstone former Associate Chair of the Department of Political Economy on April 3, 2019, at age 96. Meyer Brownstone was a great teacher and mentor and an inspiration to a generation of students who had the privilege of studying with him both at the University of Toronto and York University, many of whom went on to successful careers in academia and the public service at all levels of government.

Meyer came from a family of immigrants in Easter Europe and grew up in North Winnipeg in a community of intense political commitment and activism. He dedicated his life to fighting for social justice and equity and promoting the civil liberties of all individuals. In 1946, at the age of 25, he joined Tommy Douglas’s Cooperative Commonwealth Federation government in Saskatchewan and went on to a stellar career in the provincial public service until the early 1960s. He was the last surviving member of the core group of provincial public servants who drafted the first provincial Medicare Act introduced in Saskatchewan on July 1, 1962. This act served as the model for the federal Medicare program introduced later that decade. While serving with the Saskatchewan government, he enrolled in and completed a PhD in Political Economy from Harvard University under the direction of John Kenneth Galbraith.

His many public service and administrative positions included Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs (Saskatchewan, 1960), U.N. Advisor to the Government of Jamaica (1962), Supervisor of Research for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Ottawa, 1964) under the leadership of Davidson Dunton and André Laurendeau, Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Political Economy (University of Toronto), U.N. Advisor to the Government of Tanzania (1969), a founding member of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (York University), Advisor for the reorganization of the Winnipeg government (1971-72) and Director of the University of Toronto’s Center for Urban and Community Studies in 1987. Working with an eager group of his graduate students, one of his many accomplishments was the design and implementation of a comprehensive suite of social services that was implemented as part of the St. Lawrence Market development during David Crombie’s tenure as Mayor of Toronto.

He participated in many charitable and educational organizations. Most notably, he was Chairperson of the Board of Directors of OXFAM-Canada between 1975 and 1992, as well as a member of the Council of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the CCIC Working Group on Latin America. As the Chair of Oxfam Canada, Meyer visited the refugee camps of Honduras and the conflict regions of El Salvador and Nicaragua, communicating stories of war, torture, and displacement to the United Nations, the United States Senate, and the Government of Canada.
During this time, he was an international observer of elections in Namibia, Mozambique, and Eritrea. He served as an NGO Observer in the first democratic elections held in South Africa after the end of the apartheid regime at the polling station where Nelson Mandela cast his first ballot. He was honoured to be the only observer of this kind to witness Mandela voting for the first time and was the first person to congratulate him on the casting of his ballot behalf of the Canadian people.

In recognition of his humanitarian work internationally, Meyer was awarded the Lester B. Pearson Peace Medal in 1986 by the Right Honourable Jeanne Sauvé, Governor General of Canada. The medal was established eight years earlier by the United Nations Association in Canada to honour, in Lester B. Pearson’s name, Canadians who have made an outstanding contribution to international understanding and cooperation.

Pre-deceased by his parents Olia and Charlie Brownstone, his beloved sister Chana and brother Soime, and his wife Diana Moeser, he is survived by his children Arni, Lisa (Gary Robins), and Keir (Jennifer Dale), his grandchildren Teva (Susan), Jacob (Alanna), Brooklyn (Bert), Midori (Anthony), Zoe, and Veronica, his great-grandchildren Atreyu and Hannah, his brother Shieky, cousins Yude and Nathan, first wife Razie, and special daughters-in-law Robin and Beatriz.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be inscribed in the Minutes and that a copy be transmitted to his family as a token of our deep gratitude and respect.