

Sussman Eulogy October 1  
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Dr. Marvin B. Sussman, Unidel Professor of Human Behavior, emeritus, passed away on August 4, 2007 at the age of 88. He came to the university in 1979 with his appointment in the Department of Individual and Family Studies with a secondary appointment in Urban Affairs, now the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. He was active in stimulating the development of the doctoral program in Family Studies and Human Development and often participated in the Urban Affairs programs and he endowed annual dissertation prizes for both programs. He was a friend of the University of Delaware Library and board member the University of Delaware Library Associates establishing the Marvin B. Sussman Asklepios fund with a generous gift. A room on the lower level of the Morris Library that is used for computer assisted instruction was named for him. He was present and spoke at its dedication in 1999. Dr. Sussman was a strong theoretical scholar, but always had a sense of the practical and necessary implications of his work and was often ahead of his time. He secured funding from local foundation and government sources to develop a day care center for fragile elderly which provided the students and the faculty at the university a model for humane and humanistic services for the elderly and their families. Dr. Sussman was not only a fascinating teacher, but a continuing mentor and sponsor of students and colleagues. He was particularly supportive of women, minorities, and older returning students at a time when these groups generally were ignored and encouraged his colleagues to take risks and be creative. His research and writing was vast and broad in its conception and cross-disciplinary in its nature encompassing family, family law and policy, community, organizations, sociology of medicine and rehabilitation, intergenerational relationships and aging. His energies and enthusiasms were directed to a holistic understanding of families and their social context and to providing better services, legal structures and policies to advance human development across the life course.

Dr. Sussman held many positions of leadership including Executive Secretary, President and Academy member of the invitational Groves Conference on Marriage and

Family, Editor of the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Founding Editor of *Marriage and Family Review*, and was active in national and international research and organizations such as the Committee on Family Research of the International Sociological Association. He received the highest award for scholarship in family studies, the Burgess Award (1980) sponsored by the National Council on Family Relations, the Distinguished Scholar Award, Family division (1985) and the Lee Founders award (1992) both awarded by the Society for the Study of Social Problems. He was elected to The National Senior Citizen Hall of Fame (1986).

After his retirement in 1988, he continued to support students and colleagues, here, attend scholarly meetings, and he was on the graduate faculty of Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, Ohio. He continued his interests in spiritual issues and his contributions to scholarly and educational ventures including the Groves Conference Sussman Award for scholarly work and the Marvin B. Sussman library at Ma's Providence Orphan's Center in Uganda which now serves over 1500 aids orphans. He was a painter and had a collection of Indian jewelry. Marvin loved beauty both of the outdoors and shaped by the human hand. For the past 15 years he resided in Sebastian, Florida with a wonderful view of the water where he was associated with the Kashi Ashram. Only two years ago he was contacting many of us to help him support a model for assisted living that included his view of a well rounded life and respect for individuals across the life course.

While he was here in Delaware he became a sailor and enjoyed belonging to the Columbia Sailing Association. His own boat was the Phoenix, which he saw as symbolizing the many lives he had enjoyed. Professor Sussman received a bachelor's degree from New York University in 1941, master's degrees from George Williams College (1943) and Yale University (1949) and a doctorate from Yale in 1951. He held the Selah Chamberlain Professor of Sociology, Case Western Reserve University, and Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Medical Social Sciences at the Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest University. Dr. Sussman will be celebrated as we attempt to reach many of the high objectives he posited and aspired to meet.