

In Memoriam
Louis Cantor
September 21, 1934—January 25, 2019

Louis Cantor, Professor Emeritus of History, passed away on Friday, January 25, 2019. Louis earned his B.S. in History from Memphis State in 1957 and his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Duke University in 1961 and 1963, respectively. Louis taught for five years as an Assistant Professor of History at Southeast Missouri State University before starting his three-decade tenure, which began in 1968 and ended with his 1998 retirement, at IPFW. One of the things that inspired his move to Fort Wayne was the repressive intellectual environment at Southeast Missouri State. The fact that Louis spoke out about civil rights, race relations, and American imperialism at IPFW and in the northeast Indiana community provides further evidence that being able to speak his mind was important. Along with being committed to social justice, Louis was very generous with students, colleagues, and the community. And he was welcoming to newcomers; one faculty member recalls that when she arrived and had no office space Louis shared his office with her.

Louis was a dedicated researcher who wrote in an elegant and engaging style that made his books accessible to the general public. During his tenure at IPFW, his two most important publications were *A Prologue to the Protest Movement: The Missouri Sharecropper Road-side Demonstrations of 1939* (1969); and *Wheelin' on Beale: How WDIA Memphis became the Nation's First All-Black Radio Station and Created the Sound that Changed America* (1992). The book became a minor classic in African American and labor history. And his book on the first all-black radio station in America received rave reviews and considerable attention. In fact, the book's movie rights were purchased (although it is yet to be made into a movie).

Since Louis taught classes on his research topics his research and teaching were interconnected. By all accounts Louis was a very gifted teacher. His classes were extremely popular, routinely full during periods of both high and low enrollments university-wide. His effective combination of styles perhaps helps explain his great success. He was known for his multimedia presentations, yet he was also masterful at engaging students in discussion and dialogue. Students enjoyed his relaxed and informal approach, but were also drawn to his classes because of their rigor. Furthermore, he reached out to and supported students beyond the classroom. He was awarded the Jack E. Ulmer Award for special service to minority and disadvantaged students.

Louis created slide-tape presentations for classroom use on African American History, the Vietnam War, Woody Guthrie's Dust Bowl, and Bob Dylan and the Protest Movement of the 1960s. He incorporated live music with his slides. Louis's engaging presentations were not only in demand in the classroom, but also the larger northeast Indiana community. He was invited between ten and twenty times a year, by local churches, schools, business and service clubs and social organizations to present his slide-tape program. Many of the organizations paid for

Louis's services, and with this money he established a special fund which was used to provide financial support for outstanding History majors and scholarships African American students. Additionally, Louis was largely responsible for organizing and coordinating a very popular local history series—"FOCUS: Fort Wayne's Past"—which was presented to the Fort Wayne community over several years and attended by approximately 5,000 people.

After his retirement in 1998, Louis remained active in academia. His third book, entitled *Dewey and Elvis: The Life and Times of a Rock 'N' Roll Deejay*, was published in 2005, and he continued teaching on a part-time basis, first in Memphis and later when he returned to Fort Wayne at IPFW.

Louis enriched life at IPFW and northeast Indiana, and he will be greatly missed by faculty, students, and the community. Louis is survived by his wife Laura.