

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Arnold O. Olson

1917- 2000

Arnold Orville Olson, associate professor emeritus of sociology, was born on March 8, 1917 in Winburne, Pennsylvania to John Frederick and Theresia Lilljastrom Olson. He attended public schools in Pennsylvania, New York, and Indiana graduating from Polk Township High School, Huntington County, Indiana in 1934. Arnold graduated summa cum laude from the College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas, in 1942; summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, 1944; and summa cum laude with a Ph. D. from the Divinity School of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in 1953.

A year after graduating from Vanderbilt, Arnold married Mary Louise Woodcox of St. Joe, Indiana on June 10, 1945 in Bellerose, New York. Together Arnold and Mary Louise have eight children.

Before joining the faculty of Indiana University—Fort Wayne, Arnold was an ordained Deacon of the Methodist Church serving the districts of New York, Connecticut, and Indiana for more than twenty years. In 1961, Dr. Olson was appointed as a Superintendent of the Hudson District in the New York Conference.

In 1967, Arnold joined the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Indiana University—Fort Wayne. He was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 1972 and retired as Associate Professor Emeritus in 1987. During his tenure he served as the chair of the department for several years. At the time Arnold joined Indiana University, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was going through its formative years with meager resources and limited personnel. In one instance, when the departmental travel budget was very little, he drove from Fort Wayne to San Antonio, Texas to present a paper and slept several nights in the car. During his chairmanship, the department received approval to offer a bachelor's degree in sociology. After relinquishing the chairmanship, Arnold served ably on numerous departmental committees that developed, for the first time, policies and criteria for reappointment, promotion, tenure, and salary increments. As chair of the department, Arnold was instrumental in starting an internship program in sociology, which placed students to do their fieldwork in numerous community agencies. To this day, the internship program remains one of the cornerstones of the sociology degree. For his efforts, Arnold deservedly received the "Outstanding and Devoted Leadership" award.

As a professor, Arnold was well read and very articulate in the areas of social psychology and the sociology of religion. His research on religious sects in America was well received. He taught his classes with a great deal of enthusiasm and passion, often teaching at 7:30 in the morning after a thirty-mile commute from Kendallville. In appreciation for his varied and

valuable contributions, the department has established a yearly "Arnold O. Olson" excellence in research award for sociology majors.

Arnold died on November 10, 2000 at Provena Sacred Heart Nursing Home in Avilla, Indiana. While the immediate cause of his death was pneumonia, he also suffered from Alzheimer's disease. He died in a nursing home, but he had been with his family until the last three weeks of his life due entirely to the loving care and determination of his wife and children. They wanted to keep Arnold with them as long as possible. We in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology who knew him remember Arnold with fond memories and a great deal of gratitude. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Mary Louise, and to his children and grandchildren.