Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Herman Goldstein

Herman Goldstein, Professor Emeritus of Law, died on January 24, 2020, in Madison, at the age of 88. He left behind a wealth of good work and good works, having contributed to the betterment of the policing profession through his scholarship, and having made better the lives of his family, friends, colleagues, students, mentees, and police officers throughout the world.

Professor Goldstein was born in New London, Connecticut, in 1931. He originally intended to pursue a modest career in city government, and obtained a master’s degree in government administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. In 1954, he took a position as an assistant city manager in Portland, Oregon, where he first spent time with police officers and became fascinated with the complexity of their work. Several years later, he worked as a researcher and analyst for the American Bar Foundation Survey of the Administration of Criminal Justice, a landmark empirical project often credited with “discovering” the breadth of police discretion. Through that work, he spent countless hours riding in police cars throughout the Midwest, developing a rich knowledge of the challenges and opportunities of modern policing. From 1960 to 1964, he served as executive assistant to the famous, reform-minded Chicago Police Commissioner O.W. Wilson, and helped undertake a wholesale restructuring of that agency.

He left Chicago in 1964 to join the University of Wisconsin Law School, with a grant from the Ford Foundation to develop new teaching materials relating to policing as it existed “on the street.” This focus on the law-in-action represented a major paradigm shift for law schools. In collaboration with Professor Frank Remington, Professor Goldstein went on to produce both scholarship and teaching materials that focused on the ability not only of the police, but also of other criminal justice system actors, to solve problems and prevent crime, rather than merely respond to it. The materials they produced, in revised form, are still used in law school classrooms today.

Professor Goldstein is best known for the development of “problem-oriented policing,” a collaborative, data-focused approach to solving community problems. His scholarly work—including his highly influential books Policing a Free Society and Problem-Oriented Policing—has influenced generations of policing scholars and professionals around the globe and won him the Stockholm Prize in Criminology in 2018. Herman admired the potential for police to serve their communities creatively, and resisted the notion that police were merely “law enforcement officers” charged with punishing those who violated the law. He saw police as caretakers, problem-solvers, and investigators whose knowledge of their communities positioned them to identify, contextualize, and respond to specific crime problems. He emphasized the power of prevention and de-emphasized the need for arrest and brute force. In many ways, his work spoke to the challenges of policing in every era.

In addition to his writing, Professor Goldstein provided on-the-ground assistance to policing agencies throughout the United States and in the United Kingdom, Chile, Israel, The Netherlands, and Australia. Closer to home, he ran a “Police Chiefs in Residence Program” that brought reform-minded police chiefs to the university, and helped develop a first-of-its-kind internship program that placed law students in police agencies to develop solutions to identified crime problems in local communities. Professor Goldstein lent his time and knowledge to numerous organizations and government committees, including the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, the National Institute of Justice, New York City’s Knapp Commission, the Police Foundation, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

Professor Goldstein was a true mensch, always making time for those who sought his counsel (and there were many). Although he retired from the faculty in 1994, he remained an active member of the academic community, mentoring younger scholars and advising police officers and agencies. His Jewish faith was an
important part of his life, and he served on the UW-Madison Hillel board and on the board of Beth Israel Center in Madison. Upon his death, scholars throughout the world flooded social media with tributes. Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum, perhaps said it best when he declared that Professor Goldstein “was the moral compass for so much of the profession’s work.”

Professor Goldstein was a proud father and grandfather. He is survived by his children Mark, David, and Rahel, and by his grandchildren Ellen, Abigail and Cara Goldstein; Vivian Goldstein; and Noah and Ari Greenlee. He will be remembered by his colleagues as a man with a keen intellect and a generous heart. May his memory be a blessing.