

Passed by the IUPUI Faculty Council at their meeting on May 5, 2009.

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION  
on Behalf of Suzanne Steinmetz  
1941-2009  
Professor of Sociology, IUPUI**

The Department of Sociology at IUPUI mourns the unexpected passing of Prof. Suzanne Steinmetz.

Suzanne Steinmetz earned a B.S. in education from the University of Delaware in 1969, after returning to school as a divorced mother of three children. She received a PhD in sociology from Case Western Reserve University in 1975. She taught at the University of Delaware from 1971-1989, where she helped to establish the doctoral program in Individual and Family Studies. She joined the IUPUI Department of Sociology in 1989. Prof. Steinmetz regularly taught courses in sociological theory and family sociology, supervised several graduate students, and recently expanded curricular offerings by launching a course on aging. She served as department chair, graduate studies director and primary committee member; she was always concerned about the health and strength of the department. She held strong opinions. You always knew where you stood with her, and friends could disagree.

Suzanne Steinmetz was known world-wide as an expert in domestic violence, making many important contributions to the field of family studies and policy development. She published 17 books and 60 research articles and chapters. She established herself as a pioneer in the academic study of family violence with the publication of her co-edited volume, Violence in the Family (1974). That book marked the beginning of a remarkable career that paved the way for many scholars who sought recognition for the academic legitimacy for the study of family violence. She can be credited with opening a field of research that has established family violence as one of the major areas of study throughout the world. She gave testimony to the U.S. Congress four times, and was a guest of President Jimmy Carter when he was in the White House. She delivered several dozens of keynote speeches around the world; her last keynote speech took place recently in China. For 11 years, she has been the editor of Marriage and Family Review, a journal published by Taylor & Francis, helping to shape the field of family studies that she loved. She involved several faculty members and graduate students in editing and writing for the journal. In an autobiographical essay written in a volume titled Pioneering Paths in the Study of Families (Haworth Press, 2001, pp. 568-9), Suzanne Steinmetz wrote: “ I believe that I am leaving behind on this earth some worthwhile accomplishments. I am very proud of my children’s successes. They are kind, compassionate, bright individuals who in many small ways work to overcome the oppression of others. I take pride in the fact that my research, along with that of others, was instrumental in the development of legislation, social policies, and social services to protect individuals from family violence....I hope that my research will contribute to a growing body of knowledge about families.”

She returned to school in her 50s to earn a master’s degree in social work from Indiana University. In the Indianapolis community she was a consultant for the Superior Court, Child Protective Services, and Community Corrections. She did pro bono counseling for organizations concerned with family violence such as Colburn Place. She was a founding board member of Compassion4kids, a non-profit group that provides support to children and families in need, which gave her additional incentive to see the world, twice going to Cuba.

Suzanne Steinmetz was a strong advocate and great mentor for students, young professionals and staff, many of whom are devastated by this loss. One faculty member said, “Some say that all it takes for those who experience challenges is to have one person in their life who truly believes in them. Sue was that person for so many students.” One student said, “I owe my degree and a good deal of my mental health to her advice and assistance. She will be remembered by me with gratitude and affection for the rest of my days.” Another said, “Sue was an amazing professor and friend to her students. I learned so much from her, not only about sociology, but about life.” Suzanne Steinmetz was generous with her time to help sick or ailing friends or to help counsel a student or staff member in crisis. She would go way out of her way to be helpful, and if she had

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something that someone needed she was quite willing to part with it. Her most notable personal characteristic was her generosity; several people said, "I never met anyone more generous in my life!" She put people in touch with needed resources to make their lives easier. She understood the importance of food in all of our lives – she brought food to department meetings to keep the atmosphere relaxed; she hosted parties on her deck at her beloved home on the lake at Geist; she assumed that graduate students could not afford to eat so she brought food to class. She specialized in finding ways to overcome obstacles that might have daunted others, whether it was writing a textbook that incorporated more theory than most, building her own bookcases, or fixing her own computer.

Suzanne Steinmetz lived her life to the fullest. She was encouraging to everyone and showed us a generosity of spirit and a quirky sense of humor that will be keenly missed. She is survived by her husband, Tom Pickett, three children, Singrid, George, and Gregg Steinmetz, and eight grandchildren.

**THUS, BE IT RESOLVED, that this memorial resolution be placed in the minutes of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis Faculty Council with a moment of silence observed in her honor. A copy of this memorial resolution will be delivered to her husband and her children.**

This resolution is written on behalf of Prof. Steinmetz's students and the staff and faculty of the Department of Sociology. This resolution was prepared by Linda Haas, Professor of Sociology.