



A Memorial to
DELBERT A. SNIDER

The occasion of the death of Delbert A. Snider, Professor of Economics Emeritus at Miami University, one of profound sorrow for those who continued to be close to him, is also an occasion for grateful celebration of his contributions to the many communities of which he was a part: to his academic colleagues and students, both at Miami University and elsewhere in this country and around the world; to his discipline and his profession; to the local community and national government which he served during the nearly five decades of his career.

Del was born in Cincinnati in 1914, went to high school and college there, graduating from the University of Cincinnati in 1936. It was at the University that he met Helen Kuller, whom he later married and who remained his lifelong partner. Many of the friendships he held closest at the end of his life were made during this period. One of his professors, P. T. Ellsworth, became not only his friend, but in at least one respect a career model, inasmuch as Del, in later years, wrote a textbook which succeeded Ellsworth's as the most popular in the field of international economics. Del extended his studies of economics at the School of International Studies in Geneva (Certificate, 1936), which he attended as Geneva Fellow of the University of Cincinnati, and at the University of Cincinnati (MA, 1937). His formal training was completed at the University of Chicago, which awarded him the Ph.D. in economics.

During the years of World War II, Del served in the U.S. Navy and also as economist with the U.S. Treasury Department. In the latter capacity, he was assigned to Honolulu, and he and Helen were present on the "infamous" day that Pearl Harbor was devastated. Later, he was Chief Treasury Representative in Tunisia in 1943, and had the same position in France in 1945-47. He had thus distinguished himself as a public servant before coming to Miami University in 1947 as Associate Professor of Economics. By 1954, when he became Professor of Economics, he had already embarked on the venture which became, perhaps, his greatest public service: the publication of *Introduction to International Economics*. During the succeeding quarter-century, and through seven editions, this was to become the most widely used college text in that field, and made him truly an educator to the nation's undergraduates.

During this period Del continued to contribute to the discipline of economics and to serve the profession, national and state governments, and business. He published four other books for students of economics, a monograph on "Optimum Adjustment Processes and Currency Areas" in Princeton University's *Essays in International Finance* series, and articles in professional journals, including the *American Economic Review*. He was a frequent participant in meetings of various professional societies, as presenter of a paper or critic. In 1948-49 he served as U.S. member of the Greek Currency Commission, incorporating his experience in that role into his doctoral dissertation. He served as President of the Midwest Economic Association in 1971-72, and participated in the Visiting Scientist Program of the American Economic Association. He served as

consultant to business (Pfizer Corporation) and to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. He was a member of the Economic Research Council of Ohio in 1965-66, was invited as a Fellow to the Merrill Conference (1957), and to the Winton Park Conference in England (1962). He also concerned himself with Miami University administration, as Chair of the Department of Economics, and as originator and prime mover in the creation of Miami's original Faculty Council. Perhaps his greatest administrative contribution to Miami, in fact to the Ohio state system of higher education, is probably unknown to most of his colleagues: the freeing of the system from the educationally uncongenial confines of the quarter calendar. It was Del's letter to the then-Chancellor, arguing that there was indeed a fair way of annual funding of universities having diverse calendars, that opened the door to the early semester calendar at Miami and elsewhere in Ohio.

Along with all these activities, Del never lost sight of the primary importance of teaching Miami's students. Known as one of the University's outstanding teachers, he brought his great pedagogical skill to 400-student lectures in Principles of Economics and to small graduate seminars in microeconomic theory and in international trade. Moreover, he was versatile, and was both able and willing to accept as diverse an instructional assignment as his Department Chair found it necessary to request. His own favorite, naturally, was the two-semester course in international economics, which today retains the basic structural and content-level characteristics which he began to impress upon it four decades ago. This was his major teaching contribution, and among the decades of Miami students to whom he was mentor are several who later have themselves made significant contributions to the discipline of economics. One of these, Chung H. Lee, presently Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, University of Hawaii, and Fellow at the East-West Center, was moved to honor Del by establishing in 1981 the Snider Prize which is awarded annually to an outstanding graduating senior Miami economics major having a special interest in international economics. In recognition of his outstanding career as educator to the nation's as well as to Miami's students, and as public servant to the nation, Miami University awarded Del the Benjamin Harrison Medallion in 1975, only the second person to have received the honor.

One of Del's most important contributions to Miami was his part in the establishment of its European Center. When Miami agreed to experiment with an academic center in Luxembourg, Del was eager to join the first team of four professors who went there to develop the program. International economics was never a more alive and relevant part of any curriculum, and he taught it in ways that helped students interpret their new experience in Europe. One of his colleagues in the inaugural year reports that students were drawn to Del because he was kind, supportive and caring in his relationships with them. Moreover, Del guaranteed that from the beginning the highest standard Miami has to offer was represented in Luxembourg. That standard, in turn, impressed the host country, and Del was able to introduce Miami's new Center to senior personnel from European government and business circles. The Center and the University owe much to Del and to his wife, Helen, for their contributions during that 1968-69 academic year, as well as during a second two-year stint at the Center in 1975-77.

Del took "early retirement" in 1978, and continued to teach half-time until 1984. Though he left the classroom behind, he never ceased wrestling with the theoretical and practical problems of economics. Visiting his home, one was as likely as not to find him in his study, working on a manuscript in longhand on legal-size yellow paper, and

thinking about the problem of crafting economic policy on an international basis in a political environment.

The record of Del's accomplishments are a necessary, but far from sufficient, basis on which to appraise the man and his significance in the lives of those with whom he associated professionally, socially or personally. While something of Del's character is, of course inherent in his published work, and more in contacts with students and colleagues, much of his nature was only subtly reflected in his day-to-day dealing with people. Rationalism and humanism coexisted in Del. He was, in classical liberal tradition, absolutely committed to the idea that rational understanding and rational methods would make the world a progressively better place. At the same time, the complexity and ambiguity of the individual riveted his attention. The needs of real people always took precedence over rational systems, although at a deeper level he was convinced that the two were not in conflict, and that the duty of intellectuals and politicians alike was to find the way to put reason in the service of human values.

Del Snider was a civic man in the best sense of the term. He involved himself in public affairs at every level, from the local community to the international arena. He cared about the world, and he saw a direct link between each individual life and the whole community. With the commitment to find the most enlightened approach to a problem, he had limited patience with narrowly provincial or dogmatic views. His habit was to search for the "best," the "truest," and frequently the "newest," idea or technique which might be applicable to a public or private matter that concerned him. Occasionally he combined his private and public concerns, as when, together with his Miami colleague, Mel Bloom, he solved his need for attractive new housing by developing a large wooded tract into the Springwood subdivision that substantially raised the quality of the local housing stock, and which thirty years later remains one of Oxford's most attractive residential areas. He repeated the process in anticipation of full retirement when, in the late 1970s, he helped conceive and was the driving force in organizing the Chestnut Hill Homeowners Association which created Chestnut Hill as a community of (shall we say) "mature" Oxfordians whose long association with one another made them a natural support group as they approached and entered retirement. Characteristically, Del was tapping into the research of sociologists as this project evolved, and he lived out his life in this intellectually conceived environment. Also characteristically, in executing these projects, he endeavored to be at the technological frontier — for example, installing a heat pump and later geothermal heating when these were novelties — even though occasionally this proved to have been risky behavior.

Del was also a family man, and was fully engaged with Helen in the joys and challenges of homemaking and raising two children, and in the unalloyed enjoyment of four grandchildren. He and Helen were inveterate travelers, with their children Suzannah and Christopher when they were young, and together in later years. They frequently played golf together, and seldom missed their Monday evening duplicate bridge group. Helen was truly his companion in pursuit of the public values and the personal goals which they deeply shared.

Although not a large person as a youth or adult, Del had very good physical coordination, which inclined him to participate in team sports in high school (football and track) and in later years drew him into golf and tennis, partly as a matter of exercise, but largely for the pure joy of physical activity. He was an indefatigable retriever in a

singles tennis match, turning an opponent's best base-line or cross-court drive into a frustrating lob that left him discouraged. His refusal to be out gunned on the court occasionally left him over extended, once resulting in a broken arm. But it was as a golfer that he truly excelled. A low-handicap player, his swing on the tee was almost a metaphor for his approach to life: rational, deliberate, invariable, and immune to distraction. As with the rest of his life, he held himself to standards of performance that never let him be complacent about "his game." A few of his friends and opponents found some occasional consolation, however, in contesting him on the racquetball court.

Delbert Snider was a man of cosmopolitan interests actively pursued, of strong convictions forcefully expressed, of social awareness usefully employed, with a large capacity for assuming responsibility for any enterprise he shared with others. Almost without realizing it, colleagues, associates and friends came to depend on him in ways that made them turn to him when a plan was needed, or when an old plan required revision. If Del ever felt unduly burdened by others' expectations of him, he never revealed this to his closest associates. He was the kind of person at least a small number of which is indispensable to a University. Miami University — faculty, staff and students — was the fortunate beneficiary of nearly four decades of his concerned, loyal, reliable and imaginative service. It is appropriate that we should celebrate his tenure here, but perhaps even more so that we emulate the quality of his participation in the life of the University.

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