



Charles W. Anderson, an ILS Tribute

Charles Anderson, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Integrated Liberal Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, passed away April 10, 2013, at age 78, in Florida. He was the Hawkins Professor of Political Science, received a Distinguished Teaching Award in 1963, and wrote many books, including *Pragmatic Liberalism*, which won the 1990-91 Spitz award for best book in political theory. Charles was a member of the core faculty group which helped revitalize ILS in the early 1980's. He mentored many Political Science and ILS teaching assistants and dissertators, and taught in the ILS program until his retirement in 1996. He continued to write, was a consultant to liberal arts colleges, and taught adults in the Leisure Learning program at the University of West Florida.

Professor Anderson began his career with a teaching and research focus in political economy, especially political and economic development in Latin America, writing several books: *The Political Economy of Mexico*; *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America*; *The Political Economy of Modern Spain*; and *Issues of Political Development*. In mid-career, he moved to a wider focus on public policy, authoring *Statecraft: An Introduction to Political Choice and Judgment*; and *Value Judgment and Income Distribution*.

For the third and, he often said, most fascinating part of his career, Professor Anderson immersed himself in political theory and liberal education. He is famous for his brilliant and witty ILS 205-206 lectures covering and weaving together the history of political philosophy, economic theory and social thought. He advised and mentored a number of graduate students, who have gone on to teach and to work in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. During this time, he also began to consult with liberal arts institutions and colleges about their missions and relevance. Out of all of this wonderful work came a series of thought-provoking books, including: *Pragmatic Liberalism*; *Prescribing the Life of the Mind*; and *A Deeper Freedom: Liberal Democracy as an Everyday Morality* (of which the distinguished political theorist, Jean Bethke Elshtain, said, "An eloquent defense of liberal democracy, no so much as abstract philosophy but as a way of life"). Some ILS seniors have read the last two books in our capstone seminar.

Charlie taught ILS 205-206, Western Culture: Political, Economic & Social Thought, in the Integrated Liberal Studies program, for a number of years. The course was broadcast across the state on WHA public radio's "University of the Air" program, and today those lectures are available in podcast at i-Tunes U, linked via the following Wisconsin Alumni Association webpage, <http://www.uwalumni.com/home/andersonlectures.aspx>, which also contains written summaries of each lecture. These lectures from the mid-1980's are still relevant today. Professor Anderson situated classical thinkers in their times and showed how they foreshadow major changes in Western thought. He also applied their theories to contemporary political, social, and economic concerns in an engaging manner. You will find these thinkers also brought to life as persons, often real characters with some contradictions and even irritating qualities. In the lectures on Socrates, he likens Socrates to an irritating guy who sidles up to you in a Northwoods bar and peppers you with puzzling questions until you want to brush him off.

Above all, in his writing and in his teaching, Professor Anderson was the master liberal educator in the Socratic tradition, asking many provocative questions and urging his students to do the same as they wrestled with the readings. Finally, he asked them how these thinkers might remain relevant and illuminate contemporary societal issues.

While Charlie "retired" in 1996 to Pensacola, Florida, he continued to write, consult, kept tabs on the ILS program in which he'd invested so much energy, and enjoyed teaching adults in the Leisure Learning Society program at the University of West Florida.