

George E. Lang Jr.
Professor of Mathematics
Fairfield University, New London 1970-2007

George E. Lang, Jr.
Thoughts from a colleague and friend
Irene Mulvey

One of the most exceptional things about George Lang was his thoughtfulness, in both senses of the word. He always listened thoughtfully and he never spoke unless he had something thoughtful to say. Because this contemplative nature was coupled with a deep understanding, based on years of scholarship and faculty advocacy, of the fundamental principles underlying academic freedom, faculty governance, and faculty rights and responsibilities, he was an invaluable resource to his colleagues at Fairfield, the Connecticut State Conference and the national AAUP, as well as a formidable opponent to any who would oppose those principles.

A list of the offices he held and the accomplishments over his long career is impressive, but it doesn't capture the integrity of his service. George was a man of honesty and intelligence, but he was also a pragmatist – well aware of political realities. One example is how he always made an effort to get to know the new faculty members on a personal level. When a young faculty member managed to speak up at a faculty meeting about a politically charged issue, he would often contact them afterwards to tell them how much he appreciated their remarks. A small gesture perhaps, but this is the kind of thoughtfulness that makes new faculty members feel included, supported and appreciated.

I asked someone, just after George's death, how in the world were we going to manage without him. It was a genuine question – at that moment, I honestly could not imagine life at Fairfield continuing without him. The mutual friend whom I had asked said, "We'll all have to do more." I think it would make George exceedingly happy to know that many of us are doing a lot more, as an inevitable and natural tribute to our friend.

He leaves the best kind of legacy, really. While he was working with us, we never stopped to realize the extent of his accomplishments. Now that he's gone and we reflect on his work and his life, and realize how selflessly he devoted himself to his colleagues and to faculty issues, we're motivated to continue his good work. I'm not sure he would have expected this, but if he were able to somehow see how his colleagues have doubled and tripled their efforts on behalf of faculty and faculty governance, I know he would take it all in very thoughtfully and, when he was ready, have something really interesting to say.

I'll miss him every day, but he continues to inspire me.
We wish you "Peace, Geo"

George E. Lang Jr.
June 29, 1942-May 9, 2007



The George E. Lang Jr. Award

Established October 11, 2007, by the Connecticut State Conference-AAUP Executive Committee in cooperation with the Fairfield University Faculty Welfare Committee-AAUP, the Award recognizes a young faculty member at Fairfield University who has shown awareness of and dedication to important AAUP issues such as academic freedom, faculty governance, and faculty rights and responsibilities.

Connecticut State Conference-AAUP
Annual Spring Meeting

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