

Remembrance of a School of Education Faculty Member

Irv Schonfeld, Professor of Psychology at the Colin L. Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, informed the Dean that Professor Ed Farrell, who was a long-time member of the faculty of the School of Education passed away this summer. These are Professor Schonfeld's words about his close friend:

“ I thought it my duty to let you know that we lost one of our own. Ed Farrell was a member of the School of Education faculty from 1985 until he retired a few years ago. He published two books on at risk high school students. He used ethnographic methods to study those students. In the first book (*Hanging In, and Dropping Out*), he studied students from poor neighborhoods who were alienated from school. He wanted to understand how their world and values did not dovetail with the world and values of the school.

In the second book (*Self and School Success*), he studied students who came from the same neighborhoods as the students in the first book but in the newer book the students he studied were successful in school. His ideas in that second book anticipated the concept of "grit," an idea that has gained many adherents in recent years (I told Angela Duckworth about Ed's ideas; she was impressed). Ed thought that if he studied successful students from poor neighborhoods he could help figure out what in their world paved the way for their motivation to succeed in school.

One of the innovations of Ed's work was that he knew that a middle-aged man could not be the ethnographer of teenagers. But he knew he needed close-in data. What he did was recruit and train students (who were the same age as the target students) to interview and collect ethnographic data from the students he targeted. What he did was very clever. And quite successful. He also worked with CCNY graduate student Adel Assal ("Attempts at Making Meaning Under Terror") to collect ethnographic data from schools in Lebanon during that country's civil war. It was a period of intense strain, and a constant threat of violence. They published their findings in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*.

After Ed retired, he wrote novels. He even started a small publishing company. He learned the art of bookbinding. I read most of his novels. He was always a good writer. And, needless to say, he loved books . . . He was the best-read person I have ever known. He read everything. Rousseau, Voltaire, Ruskin, the Bible, Augustine, and much more. I will miss him.”

We will all miss him.