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J. Richard (Rich) Aronson Memorial Resolution

In loving memory of J. Richard (Rich) Aronson of Bethlehem, PA, the Martindale Center and Lehigh University community are sad to announce his passing on January 15, 2023. Rich was the William L. Clayton professor of Business and Economics at Lehigh University, creator and former director of the Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise, published author, editor, colleague, mentor, and friend.

Throughout his 50-plus-year career at Lehigh, Rich won many awards for his teaching. However, his work in starting the Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise, his directorship of that program from 1980-2015, and his continued connection to the Martindale alumni/ae will be his most lasting legacy. To date, over 400 students have graduated from the Martindale Associates program and have had the opportunity to research global topics and visit countries and regions to explore and publish research articles about central challenges in those countries. The vision he built for the program equips students to reach beyond what they thought possible by becoming a published author before graduating, by giving students confidence and the opportunity to interact with leading experts and explore the world. Through Rich, the Martindale alumni/ae have created a “family” that upholds and continues to mentor each student in each cohort as they move forward in their careers. In 1980, when he started the Martindale Associates program, the program was groundbreaking in that it was one of the earliest programs to offer students a cultural and global experience within a class setting. It was one of the first of Lehigh’s interdisciplinary programs to foster undergraduate research. Student research articles are published annually in a dedicated journal, *Perspectives on Business and Economics*.

Rich received his undergraduate degree from Clark University and his master’s degree at Stanford University. He returned to Clark to receive his doctorate. Rich was originally a chemistry, then a math major at Clark before he became interested in economics. He believed he could utilize

economics to improve and understand the world still living in the throes of a post-depression and post-war state.

Rich arrived at Lehigh in 1965. He was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1968 and to Full Professor in 1972. Throughout his career at Lehigh Rich was the personification of excellence in the triad by which the academy assesses faculty achievement: research and scholarship, teaching, and service. Perhaps more importantly, across his long tenure as a senior member of the faculty Rich performed an exemplary role in mentoring junior colleagues in each of these three areas as they advanced their careers in their service to Lehigh and its students.

Upon his arrival at Lehigh in 1965, Rich was quickly beloved by his colleagues and students alike. He always had the ability to build relationships, especially using humor. His colleagues believe this was his special gift, enabling him to successfully engage his 500-plus student Eco 1 classes over the years. He also taught Money and Banking, Corporation Finance, and Public Finance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is estimated that by his retirement in 2015 Rich had taught more than 20,000 students, more than any other professor in Lehigh's history.

During his tenure, Rich received four teaching awards: the Lehigh University Award in 1968 for distinguished teaching by a junior faculty member; the Stabler Award in 1974 for demonstrating mastery of his field and superior ability in communicating it to others; the Deming Lewis Faculty Award in 1984, given by the Class of 1974 to the faculty member who most significantly influenced their educational experience; and the Beta Gamma Sigma Award presented by the Business Honorary Society. His legacy to Lehigh University and the Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise, his love of teaching, and his deep devotion and engagement with generations of Lehigh students will forever be cherished.

Rich also loved organizing faculty and student activities outside of the classroom. He and his wife Judy served as the first residential headmasters of Taylor House. Taylor Residential College provided cultural experiences to 160 students each academic year.

According to WorldCat.org, Rich is credited with 209 publications, in three languages, and 5,279 library holdings. His publications include fourteen books and numerous articles in such

highly-ranked journals as the *Economic Journal*, *Public Choice*, the *National Tax Journal*, the *Journal of Finance*, and the *Journal of Economic Literature*. In addition to his holding the William L. Clayton Professorship, he also received the Hillman Award for service to the university and the Libsch Award for research. He was a two-time Fulbright scholar and was also an honorary professor of economics at the University of York in England.

Rich also served on the Pennsylvania Public Employee Retirement Study Commission for many years. He was appointed by then-Governor Dick Thornburgh in the 1980s and even served as vice-chair of this Commission for several years.

More than his work, he loved being a husband to Judy, father to Sarah, Miriam, and Annie, and grandfather to Aaron, Rebecca, Elliot, and Rachael. Rich spent his life bringing joy and knowledge to his family and others, pushing people to do more, travel more, to do their best, and strive for what makes them happy.

We move that this memorial resolution be made a permanent part of the faculty record by being included in the minutes of this meeting, and that copies be sent to his wife, Judy, and to his daughters Sarah, Miriam, and Annie.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Economics Department,

Judith McDonald
Vincent Munley
Robert Thornton
Todd Watkins