



A FIFTY-YEAR REMEMBRANCE OF JACK BARNARD

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I still remember my first months at Oakland University in 1965. Jack came up to me at the end of a harried day and suggested that we go out and have a drink together. It was a welcomed suggestion. We talked and relaxed a bit, beginning a long personal relationship. He and his wife had a wide circle of friends, including their “Oberlin Gang” and others. They introduced us to these lovely people who became a most important part of our new life in Michigan, and, in many cases, our present. Jack’s low-keyed personality and casual, friendly manner belied his bedrock values and principles, always firmly liberal and progressive minded, which marked him as an academic and a citizen of the wider world. He sought always to advance the common good with fair and equal opportunities for all in our diverse society. His quietly competent and fair-minded qualities earned him the respect of the entire university community.

Jack’s feelings about organized labor in American life are exemplified in his majestic account of the UAW under Walter Reuther.

In the history department, he was a much-respected figure in long-term leadership roles, including head of the faculty union for a time. I recall after collective bargaining negotiations deadlocked with the Administration, a short-lived strike was called. Jack dragged me with him to picket at a main entrance of the university, where members of the administration

drove by and onto the campus. Jack waved very cordially to them as they passed by into the university. This seemed to symbolize Jack's firm belief in how differences in interests, beliefs, and other matters should be handled in a truly civil and peaceful society.

Jack enjoyed a full and fulfilling life in his career and personal life. He had a 60-year marriage to his college sweetheart Joan, a partnership of love and respect that produced a fine family. He had a rich cultural and recreational life until his last years of severely disabling medical problems. With his wife Joan's solid support, he faced these struggles with usual grace and courage.

During his long career, which coincided with Oakland's early years, Jack contributed much to making Oakland a thriving, quality university with a fine community, diverse in person and persuasion.

In sum, Jack was a good man, whose wise, thoughtful, and balanced qualities our contentious world sorely needs.