

Memorial Resolution
ROBERT HEINICH
(1923-2020)

Robert Heinich was born May 31, 1923 in Ridgewood in the borough of Queens, New York City. He was one of five sons of a couple whose parents had immigrated to the United States from Germany. He showed an early aptitude for science and mathematics and was admitted to Stuyvesant High School, a magnet school for young people talented in math and science. As he rode the subway between Queens and Manhattan every day, he struck up an acquaintance with another young man who shared an interest in poetry, including its oral presentation. At a music store in Astoria, they rented, for 50 cents an hour, a small studio and disc recorder to record their oral interpretations of such romantic classics as Poe's "The Raven," "The Bells," and "Annabel Lee," and FitzGerald's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam."

This led to an interest in the art films of that time—Cocteau's "Blood of the Poet," Renoir's "La Grande Illusion," and Ivens's "The Spanish Earth." Here one could experience the dramatic power that could be achieved when poetry, music, drama, and visual art were combined.

Heinich was pursuing studies in engineering at Cooper Union when he was drafted for military service from 1943 to 1946 in what Bob liked to refer to as "a loose association with the Army Air Corps." The inclinations and habits of mind that he had already developed did not jibe well with the army's preferences for discipline and bureaucracy, but he and the army survived his hitch, mutually agreeing that he should remain at the rank of private.

One of the accidents of his military service was that, having been stationed in Denver, San Antonio, and Carlsbad, NM, he discovered the Southwest. After discharge, he enrolled at Colorado State College (now University of Northern Colorado) at Greeley, where he helped form the campus chapter of the American Veterans' Committee, the only veterans' group that accepted women and blacks into its ranks—an alternative to the conformist values of other veterans' organizations. At one of these meetings, Heinich happened to sit next to the campus audio-visual director, who offered him a part-time job. There, he found himself among a coterie of devotees of the media arts, among whom he felt at home. He decided then and there to abandon his plans to become a college math professor and to find a career in the application of media to education. It was also at Greeley that Heinich met his future wife, Christine Rebecca Finegan, with whom he formed a happy, lifelong partnership.

In the fall of 1949, Heinich took his first full-time position, as audio-visual director of the Colorado Springs public schools, equipped not only with a B.A. and M.A. from Colorado State College but also with a unique combination of talents—esthetic, engineering, and political. Between 1949 and 1962, Heinich built a strong foundation—for the school district and for himself. His program gained regional and national repute. For his accomplishments, he was made an honorary life member of the Colorado Educational Media Association. During those years he also found time to serve as first president of the Colorado Springs Friends of the Library, to serve five years as president of the local credit union, to write a regular column of record reviews for the city's newspaper, and to act in an amateur theatrical group.

In 1962, he left to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Southern California. This, too, he accomplished with distinction when his dissertation, "Instructional Technology and Instructional Management: A Proposal for a New Theoretical Structure," was recognized as the outstanding dissertation of 1967 at USC. It was shortly afterward published by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) as one of its major theoretical underpinnings.

Developing new theoretical constructs was a hallmark of Heinich's work. He was well known and frequently cited for his conceptual framing of the major elements of instructional technology. He was less known for, but equally proud of, a construct in research methodology—the John Henry effect. In his work with implementing innovations such as televised courses, he noticed a tendency for teachers in the "control group" to be keenly aware that their work was being compared with that of a mechanical system in the "experimental treatment." He saw teachers—like John Henry in the legend—working extra hard to make sure that their teacher-led class outperformed the other one. Heinich hypothesized that this tendency could account for part of the "no significant difference" so often found in studies comparing instructional methods.

Around the time Heinich completed his doctoral studies there was a surge of interest among textbook publishers in the publication of complete systems of instruction. Doubleday and Co. convinced Bob to become director of its nascent Educational Systems Division in 1967. During his two years there he produced a number of educational films, audiotapes, filmstrip sets, and reading programs.

In 1969, though, he decided to return to the education field, joining the Instructional Systems Technology faculty at Indiana University as a full professor, where he was to remain until his retirement in 1990, serving as department chair from 1979 to 1984. He primarily taught graduate courses in the theoretical foundations of instructional technology—frequently team-teaching with Michael Molenda—and in cinema appreciation. He also formed a departmental nucleus of racquetball players—students and faculty, whose successors continue to the present time.

In 1971-72, he served as president of AECT; and during his presidency the association set up a parallel foundation, the ECT Foundation, of which Heinich became the first president and remained so for ten years, 1972-82.

Heinich's engagement with the big ideas in the field led him to many editorial positions, instigating and guiding the intellectual development of the field. His contributions as consulting editor to half-a-dozen journals were more than honorary; he provided true mentoring to those who sought his counsel. His most prominent editorial position was as editor of *AV Communication Review*, which under his thirteen-year stewardship evolved into the *Educational Communication and Technology Journal* (ECTJ).

Heinich's insights into the influence of structural factors on the uses of technology are well summarized in two award-winning articles published in ECTJ: "The Proper Study of Instructional Technology" (1984) and "Instructional Technology and the Structure of Education" (1985). In these widely cited essays, he demonstrated how the very organizational structure of schools and universities militates against their acceptance of technology-based instruction.

Despite these many and visible practical and theoretical accomplishments, Heinich's name is probably best known through his co-authorship with Michael Molenda and James D. Russell of *Instructional Media and the New Technologies of Instruction*. Appearing in its first edition in 1982, this textbook not only garnered "book of the year" honors from both major professional associations but also rapidly became the most widely adopted textbook for instructional media courses, with new editions continuing through the twelfth in 2018.

He was generous in sharing his knowledge with the field, in many ways other than his writings. He worked behind the scenes for years in the early 1970s, leading the AECT team that collaborated with the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) to produce national standards for school media programs, published in 1975 as *Media Programs: District and School*. He served on many teams that visited and

evaluated school and university media programs. For nearly 20 years, he served as a juror at the American Film and Video Festival.

Heinich's achievements have been recognized by the two most prominent professional associations in his field: the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) granted him a presidential citation, and AECT granted him the Distinguished Service Award, emblematic of a career that is unusually distinguished in terms of the quality and quantity of professional contributions. The recognition of which he was proudest, though, was the Distinguished Alumni award, as a "trailblazer," from University of Northern Colorado (formerly Colorado State College) in 1995.

Bob, with his wife Chris, remained active after retirement in 1990. They participated in several square-dancing and ballroom-dancing clubs, spending the summers dancing in Colorado and the rest of the year dancing in Indiana, until their move to Colorado Springs in 1994. He continued to do photography, to expand his formidable collection of recorded classical music, poetry, and drama, and to work with the local historical society. He died January 12, 2020 at age 96 in Colorado Springs following a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, Christine, and their son, Paul.

This memorial tribute will be presented to members of the Bloomington Faculty Council and it will be preserved in its minutes and archive. Copies will be presented to Prof. Heinich's wife and son.

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