

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Michael Wilkerson
(1955-2020)

Michael Neil Wilkerson was senior lecturer, also serving as director of Arts Administration Programs, in the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Bloomington. He was appointed to the O'Neill School in 2012, but his long affiliation with IU began in 1980, as administrative assistant to the vice president.

Mike was born October 12, 1955, in Franklin, Indiana, to Anne and William Wilkerson. He earned his bachelor's degree from IU, pursuing wide-ranging interests in literature, politics, history, theatre, and journalism. As an undergraduate at IU, he lived at Collins Living Learning Center among a vibrant community of talented students who inspired his love of the arts, and began his writing career with contributions to the *Bloomington Herald-Telephone*, as well as being one of the founders of the *Indiana Review*. In 1979, he received an M.F.A. from the writing seminars at Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with the experimental novelist John Barth.

From 1989 to 1995, Mike was director of Ragdale Foundation's artists' residency program in Lake Forest, Illinois. He then served as director of the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center.

He was a great advocate for Indiana writing, co-editing (with his wife, Deborah Galyan) *New Territory: Contemporary Indiana Fiction*, and (with Richard Thomas) *The Landlocked Heart: Poems from Indiana*.

Over the years, Mike held a number of positions at IU, including assistant to Chancellor Ken Gros Louis from 1987 to 1989, and coordinator of Academic Affairs and senior writer and policy assistant to the vice president from 1998 to 2007. During this time, he also taught in IU's Arts Administration program, at that time housed in the Jacobs School of Music. He then took a position teaching arts administration at American University in Washington, DC, returning to Bloomington in 2012.

Mike was an active advocate for the arts in Bloomington, serving on the Bloomington Arts Council, the board of the Buskirk-Chumley Theater, and as a founding board member of Cardinal Stage Company. He also worked at the national level as a board member of the Alliance of Artists Communities and the Association of Arts Administration Educators, and as a review panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

At the O'Neill School, he was a beloved instructor in arts administration and policy, inspiring hundreds of students now working around the globe to connect people to the arts, and to further the cause of inclusion and equity in the creative sector. He led the efforts to include students in the arts and cultural initiatives of the Bloomington campus's Center for Rural Engagement. Students remember him as one who was committed to elevating the voices of minority students. He coordinated bringing to the O'Neill School the Public Policy and International Affairs program, dedicated to increasing diversity in public service, which included arranging for students to be able to meet renowned author Ta-Nehisi Coates.

He will always be remembered by alumni and colleagues as a person of generosity of spirit, and with a wry, but always kind, sense of humor.

I request that this memorial tribute to Michael Wilkerson be presented to the members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that it be preserved in its minutes and archive, and that after its presentation copies be sent to members of his family.

Michael Rushton
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