

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

**Charles F. Bonser**

(1933-2024)

Charles (Chuck) Bonser was the founding dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (now the O'Neill School) at Indiana University. He led the school for sixteen years, from its formation in 1972 through 1988.

Chuck was born on February 15, 1933, in Youngstown, Ohio to Anita and William Harley Bonser. He attended Bowling Green State University (BGSU), where he met his future loving wife, Nancy. They married in 1955. Following his graduation from BGSU in 1954, Chuck joined the United States Air Force, proudly serving as a pilot for the next five years and rising to the rank of captain. During that time, Chuck and Nancy also had their first experience living overseas (in Italy), sparking their life-long interest in exploring the world.

In 1959, he and Nancy moved to Bloomington, Indiana so Chuck could pursue graduate work in the Indiana University School of Business (now the Kelley School of Business), a decision that led to Bloomington becoming their long-term home. Chuck earned his M.B.A. in 1961 and his doctorate in business in 1965. In 1965, he joined the Indiana University business faculty as an assistant professor of business economics and as associate director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, rising quickly to the rank of full professor in 1971.

Chuck's leadership acumen became apparent early in his career. He was appointed associate dean of the School of Business in 1969 and, in 1971, John Ryan, president of Indiana University, asked him to lead an initiative to form a School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA). President Ryan appointed Chuck as this new school's founding dean. During his tenure as dean, SPEA grew in reputation and size, eventually developing a presence on most of Indiana University's multiple campuses. He laid the foundation and legacy that accounts for SPEA becoming one of the largest and most highly rated public affairs schools in the world.

After returning to his faculty role in 1988, Chuck enjoyed policy research and applying his leadership skills to program development as director of SPEA's Institute of Development Strategies. He shaped the global profile of the school by initiating, developing, and leading student study abroad programs focused on the European Union. Chuck continued to contribute in many ways to the O'Neill School and Indiana University well after his retirement in 1998.

Chuck's professional impacts also extended beyond Indiana University. He served as special assistant to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services and as a consultant to the State of Indiana, the Brookings Institution, and the U.S. Civil Service Commission. He held leadership positions in numerous national professional organizations and helped develop academic programs around the world. Among his leadership

roles, he was president of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs, president of the Pi Alpha Alpha, National Public Affairs Honorary, and vice president of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration. He was an elected fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. Prestigious recognitions and awards for his service included a special recognition from the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana University Bicentennial Award in 2020. He was also committed to the communities in which he lived, often volunteering his strategic planning talents on projects for the city of Bloomington, the Big Arts on Sanibel Island, and for his church.

We request that this memorial tribute to Charles Bonser 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.

David Audretsch

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