



## OBITUARY

Anselm L. Strauss

1916–1996

With the death September 5 of Anselm Strauss at age 79 of a heart attack in San Francisco, the international social science and health community lost one of its pioneers and most distinguished and prolific contributors. He was Professor Emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco where he had founded an innovative and rigorous doctoral program in sociology which emphasized qualitative research in health care contexts.

His wide ranging scholarship took symbolic interactionism into new fields, including nursing, education and social work where his concepts and mode of inquiry have become part of the fundamental vocabulary. He influenced substance and theory in medical sociology; sociology of work, occupations and professions; sociology of organizations; sociology of emotions and qualitative methods.

All these earned him an international reputation which drew students and visiting scholars from Eastern and Western Europe, Asia and the Middle East to UCSF to work and study with him, and to add intellectual stimulation to the department and the Strauss' always enjoyable hospitality. Even before the era of e-mail, he maintained extensive research networks in Germany, England, Japan and France. These collegial ties resulted in translations of his work into French, German and Japanese. He was an invited professor at the Universities of Frankfurt, Hagen and Constance in Germany, Cambridge and Manchester in England; Paris and Adelaide. He consulted for the World Health Organization in nursing education in Southeast Asia in 1962 and 1970.

An alumnus of the University of Virginia, he received both Master's and Doctoral degrees in sociology from the University of Chicago. After finishing his doctorate he taught at Indiana University and the University of Chicago. In 1959, Dean Helen Nahm recruited him to teach research methods at the University of California, San Francisco School of Nursing where he established a research unit that later became the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. In addition to the graduate program in sociology, he joined in founding the first doctoral program in nursing in the western U.S. Both the sociology and nursing doctoral programs still draw international students keen to study in his tradition. He retired in 1987, and in spite of declining health remained a highly productive

scholar and influential mentor to graduate and postdoctoral students in sociology and nursing and young faculty in several fields, aided by his wife Frances whose own career in the American Civil Liberties Union gave him great pride. Besides a steady flow of articles, he published at least a book a year after he turned 70. He had just finished proofreading his 32nd book the day before he died.

Anselm's academic publications ranged from the first major undergraduate text in 1949 on symbolic interactionist social psychology (with Alfred J. Lindesmith and joined in later editions by Norman K. Denzin), now in its 9th edition, to his culminating theoretical statement, *Continual Permutations of Action* (1993).

In the first of many works in medical sociology he led an interdisciplinary research team (Rue Bucher, Leonard Schatzman, Melvin Sabshin and Danuta Erlich) which produced *Psychiatric Ideologies and Institutions*, a major ethnographic exploration. This book modified the view of the hospital as a rigid structure, and patients as passive nonentities. Later, working collaboratively with colleagues and students from numerous disciplines he made pioneering contributions to the social psychology of health and illness, most notably with studies of chronic illness, dying patients and the sociology of pain, risk and the politics of medical care. Not the least of his contributions are the hosts of former students who found him a gentle, informal and inspiring mentor.

Among his co-authored volumes are *Awareness of Dying, Time for Dying* (with Barney Glaser), *Chronic Illness and the Quality of Life*, 2nd ed. (with Barney Glaser), *The Politics of Pain Management* (with Shizuko Fagerhaugh), *The Social Organization of Medical Work* (with Shizuko Fagerhaugh, Barbara Suczek and Carolyn Wiener), *Unending Work and Care* (with Juliet M. Corbin).

Anselm's work with Barney Glaser on grounded theory revived, sustained and reshaped qualitative sociological methodology. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* preserved sociological qualitative research when positivism increasingly dominated the social sciences. He advanced and refined the original framework in *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* and *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory—Procedures and Techniques* (with Juliet M. Corbin).

He received numerous prestigious awards: the Leo G. Reeder Award for Distinguished Contributions to Medical Sociology, the George Herbert Mead Career Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, the Cooley-Mead Award from the Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association, the Helen Nahm Research Lectureship at the UCSF School of Nursing, the UCSF Campus Distinguished Lectureship and the Cooley Award for the best book in 1978 from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction for *Negotiations: Varieties, Processes, Contexts and Social Order*.

He is survived by Frances, his wife of 56 years, his niece Louise Resnick, his sister-in-law Sylvia Zucker, and several nephews and nieces. A memorial was held November 1 at UCSF with local, national and international colleagues and former students remembering and celebrating Ans' life and work. There will be two observances at ASA 1997 in Toronto: a special paper session organized by Kathy Charmaz for the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction and a

memorial remembrance co-sponsored by SSSI, ASA sections from medical sociology, social psychology and work, occupations and organizations on Monday August 11 at 6:30p.m. Additionally, there will be memorial sessions in Europe. Adele Clarke will edit a special issue of *Symbolic Interaction* on work by younger scholars working in his tradition.

Donations may be made to the Anselm Strauss Fund, c/o the UCSF Foundation, 44 Montgomery St., Suite 2200, San Francisco, CA 94104, U.S.A. or to the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California, 1663 Mission St., Suite 460, San Francisco, CA 94103, U.S.A.

This obituary, prepared by Virginia Olesen, UCSF, with Frances Strauss' help, draws on an earlier text in ASA Footnotes written by Kathy Charmaz, Sonoma State University; Adele Clarke, UCSF; Virginia Olesen, UCSF; Leonard Schatzman, UCSF; S. Leigh Star, University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana; Holly Wilson, UCSF.