

Professor Emeritus Henry Hirsch Wasser, age 97, died on Sunday morning, September 4, 2016. The passing was relatively peaceful. He leaves behind his wife Solidelle, a son, Prof. Frederick Wasser of Brooklyn College and a daughter. He will be buried on Wednesday without services.

Henry Wasser was an eminent figure in American higher education. Born in 1919 in Pittsburgh PA, he was the founding Dean of Faculties for Richmond College, an upper-level campus created as part of the City University of New York in 1966, now part of the College of Staten Island. He helped recruit the faculty for the college and served until 1973. He worked one year as the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Cal State University in Sacramento before returning to CUNY as a professor. He became increasingly involved with the University Faculty Senate and served as its chair from 1980 until 1986. He was a strong advocate of faculty governance in the aftermath of open admissions and the imposition of student tuition and other major changes at CUNY. His strong views on the role of public higher education drew international attention and he worked with prominent European scholars on anthologies and major conferences about comparative higher education. He has been consulted on higher education policies in Poland, Turkey and elsewhere.

Professor Wasser earned his B.A. and M.A. from Ohio State University and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. His field was American Studies and he was recruited by Sigmund Skard to help with the program for a year at the University of Oslo in 1963. He was a professor at City College from 1946.

He also taught at the University of Thessaloniki, the University of Oslo, University of Sussex, California State University in Sacramento, the University of Aveiro, Portugal, and the University of Bergen in Norway.

His writings include [The Scientific Thought of Henry Adams](#), the co-authorship of [The Compleat University](#) (with Ulrich Teichler and Harry Hermanns) and the editing of the *Functions and Problems of the Urban University*. He has written for numerous publications about the policies of higher education and his articles have been translated into several languages.

After leaving as chair of the University Faculty Senate and Faculty Trustee of CUNY in 1986 he became the long-serving Executive Director of the CUNY Academy. He became Executive Director Emeritus in 2011.

The CUNY Academy mourns its greatest leader. Last year the Academy established the Henry Wasser awards for Assistant Professors. On Thursday, October 27, the awards will be given as the Henry Wasser Memorial Awards.

Manfred Philipp
Executive Director, the CUNY Academy for the Humanities and Sciences

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