

ble and the professor plunged into politics in 1965 by running for the Virginia House of Delegates. Robinson lost by approximately 1,200 votes, due in large measure to a split in the black political leadership. To correct this major disadvantage, he immediately set about the task of mending the split. In 1969, with united black support, he won the seventh and last seat. Robinson became Norfolk's first black legislator since Reconstruction. Initially there was skepticism regarding the effectiveness of a black legislator in a white-dominated legislature. Robinson's belief in the reasonableness of men coupled with his forthright approach soon won him both respect and legislative victories and put to rest any questions concerning his effectiveness. His attitude toward his fellow legislators was reflected in his comment that "I came to regard them as honest men, individuals of reason, who cared about other people."

Robinson piloted several pieces of landmark legislation through the General Assembly. One of his most important bills, passed in the early 1970s, was the one that equalized the retirement pay of black teachers who for decades had received only half of the salary of their white counterparts. Dr. Robinson was instrumental in winning passage of a fair housing bill that permitted blacks to live where they pleased. Governor Holton was to cite this piece of legislation as the most significant of his administration. Legislatively, Robinson contributed to the whole field of education and welfare. The quality of his leadership became more evident and his political influence steadily increased as he came to chair the powerful Health, Institutions and Welfare Committee of the House of Delegates, and The Conference of Black Elected Officials of Virginia, and the Steering Committee of the Concerned Citizens of Norfolk. The latter's "Golden Rod Guide Ballot" became the symbol of the black community's "official" endorsement of a candidate.

Robinson is credited with having helped to bridge the gap between black and white Virginians and Governor John N. Dalton had already described him as "a champion of the disadvantaged and a tireless advocate of truly equal opportunity."

On Sunday, January 18, 1981, Robinson's four-year battle with bone cancer came to an end. His courageousness made "Doc" or "Billy," as he was affectionately called, one of those cancer victims who gave you much more than you could ever return. As J. Harvie Wilkinson III, the editor of the daily *Virginian-Pilot*, confessed, "He's someone I can turn to for inspiration and refreshment." Further, in admiring Robinson's position that Reagan deserves from blacks an open mind and a fair chance, Wilkinson reflectively said of Robinson that: "He is a leader not willing to despair politically, but not able to take hope. He is a man who has seen great prejudice but also great progress. He is proud to be black and proud to be American—a man whose perceptions display the most disciplined balance, a man fully conversant with the darker dimensions of America, but also its glorious gateways of hope."

The people of Norfolk and Virginia have lost a valuable public servant and Norfolk State University has lost a great champion and a master teacher. A teacher who was concerned both with students as individuals and with their individual development. He inspired and encouraged a legion of students.

A William Robinson, Sr. memorial scholarship fund at Norfolk State University has been established to honor Dr. Robinson. Gifts to the fund, which are tax deductible, should be made out to the William Robinson, Sr. Scholarship Fund and sent to Dr. Rudolph Gordon in care of the Department of Political Science at Norfolk State University.

While saddened by the passing of "Doc," we are nonetheless heartened by the realization that the tenacious and compelling spirit and the constant pursuit of truth and justice which exemplified the life of William P. Robinson, Sr. will serve both as a model and as a continuing source of inspiration to us all.

Rudolph Gordon
Norfolk State University

Richard Carlton Spencer

Richard Carlton Spencer died on October 26, 1980 as a result of congestive heart failure following many years of poor

health. Professor of Political Science Emeritus of Coe College since 1966, he kept up with both his professional and reform concerns until the last year when blindness prevented reading.

Born in Lincoln, Nebraska on December 18, 1893, he grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Trinidad, Colorado. After some years in the Colorado mine fields living through violent strikes, he went to the University of Colorado, where he received his B.A. and M.A. in 1921 and 1922. Following a few years of teaching, he was admitted to the University of Illinois, where he received his Ph.D. in 1928. His teaching career included faculty appointments at Pacific University, Linfield College, University of Illinois, Western Reserve University, University of Cincinnati, University of Nebraska, and, finally, Coe College from 1948 through 1966 where he was professor and chairman of political science until 1960. His academic career was interrupted during World War II when he assumed responsibility in the United States Bureau of the Census for the systematic development of state and local government statistics, and at various other times when he served as consultant to municipalities and state legislatures generally with problems relating to fair representation and finance.

Richard Spencer's favorite class was "Legislative Institutions," and many generations of students found his use of documentary sources, his photographic representations and his meticulous attention to detail an inspiration. Students from these classes have served in many legislatures and the Congress, and others developed careers as political scientists.

For him political institutions, especially in democracies, could be more than fig leaves covering power plays, and it was this question that interested him as a scholar and this issue motivated his reform concerns as well. Research trips to Scandinavia, the three great dictatorships of the 1930s, Canada, and to parliaments on both sides of the Atlantic convinced him that while not panaceas, proportional representation, unicameral legislatures, and the Swedish form of party government assured the transparency for political decisions which could make the linkage between citizen and government more effectively democratic.

These views are spelled out in a number of papers including "Party Government and the Swedish Riksdag," *APSR* (1945), "The Unicameral Legislature of Ontario," *APSR* (1938), "The Swedish Pattern of Responsible Government," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* (1940), "Separation of Control and Law-making in Sweden," *Political Science Quarterly* (1940), and "Nebraska Idea 15 Years Old," *National Municipal Review* (1949). They provided one basis for the APSA proposal for a comparative study of U.S. state legislatures which was subsequently carried through by Professor Zeller. He published in 1945 a *Topical Index to National Constitutions*, widely used by post-World War II constitution writers and many other papers related to municipal structure and finance, state government, political parties and elections in this country and others.

We can say with complete confidence that in one respect he was our model. The senior author remembers Richard as standing first in intellectual concern among graduate students in political science when they were both in the University of Illinois Ph.D. program. He was always looking for something in back of the interesting subject or idea that determined the importance of what attracted our attention. He was searching for the significant and he was always ready to join others in the search. It was this readiness to search for meaning and significance that distinguished him from other students that he encountered there, and we had it off and on for two full years.

When the junior author joined Richard at Coe in 1957,, he found this same vigorous quest for meaning and significance. This was reflected in his teaching and research, and it was widely recognized in the state of Iowa and the Cedar Rapids community as it was on the campus. He was always concerned with political behavior, not with the artifacts such as responses to surveys of political attitudes.

Significantly, he rigorously separated his reform concerns from his political science, but the cause of reapportionment and fair representation provided one meeting point during the mid-century; this involved actively both Richard and Pearl Conger Spencer, his wife since 1915. He was elected President of Midwest Political Science Association in

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1961 in recognition of his service to our profession.

Pearl Spencer died in 1978. However, their concern for peace and for students is reflected in his bequests to the American Friends Service Committee, to the University of Colorado scholarship fund, and to Coe College to commence a scholarship fund for promising students majoring in political science.

Charles S. Hyneman
Indiana University, Emeritus

Richard W. Taylor
Kent State University